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THE BELOVÉD ADVENTURE

BY

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

Author of "The Human Fantasy."



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1912

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COME to my heart, come to my song, I will give you
the secret,

Come, I will give it to you free as the sun or the
wind!

I scatter my bounties under the feet of all men,
Song was never a chooser of persons.

You that have hated, you that have loved me, come I
will greet you!

Come, I will give you love! Song has a bosom for
all.

Not I, but the Song that is over me speaks to you
singing:

Think you I, of myself, have made it!

Hated have you, or dearly loved, I love you and
greet you.

O in the buoyance of Song where is there room
for hate?

I whirl my hair in your face for sheer defiance;

Turning then, on the brows I kiss you.

I

SEA POEMS

*The sea is wild and flecked with white,
The dunes lean dumb and drear,
Something familiar in the night
Thrills me a moment here.*

*The darkness and the salt sea's tang,
They stab me through and through
With ecstasy,—the sharp, sweet pang
And memory of you.*

ALONG THE DUNES

THE moonlight makes the dunes seem pale and gray,
And the long sea-mist veils their lonely faces.
Along the horizon in the clear, cold spaces
Seaward, a few stars tremble in the spray
Of the flung sea's embraces,

And on the dunes still shimmers like a wine
The daylight, where the rose of day grows tired.
With starlight, and tonight, doomed and inspired,
The white sea labors, line upon plunging line,
Toward the blind goal desired

And all the air is dumb with infinite sound.
One house upon the dunes stands dumbly yearning
With dull, dark windows toward the unreturning;
The fierce, eternal waters all around
Leap in the moonlight burning.

SEA MEMORIES

THESE dunes, these low, flat wastes and solitudes of
sand,
Old scraps, washed weeds and wrecks that the sea-
grass grows through,

Gaunt timbers and dead bones that strew this sterile
land,—

How they recall the dream and memory of you,
The silence of your eyes, the trembling of your hand!

Northward and to the south the low clouds line the
sea,

The bleak and barren dunes lean forward with a
pang
And sudden sense of you,—a flash of memory;

Here is the fisher-hut, half tumbled, where you
sang
That dear, ridiculous song and turned and laughed
at me.

And all the rolling beach, where when the twilight
came

We wandered;— this gray bluff, now bare, was
overgrown
With straggling weeds, the dunes reëchoed to your
name.

Through the hot swooning night the shrill cicadas'
drone
Shimmered, the heavy vault hung low with flame on
flame.

The arbor here is fallen where once we sat and
heard

The chill September wind blow through the star-
lit roof;

I see your gesture yet, when at some foolish word
 Impious from my lips, you turned in stern re-
 proof—

So seriously grave, so dear and so absurd.

Ah those evenings vanished, those nights of long ago,
 Alas where are they fled! The sea-wind moans,
alas—.

The sad, immortal sea heaves tremulously below
 And the dunes answer not. The sea-birds wheel
 and pass.

The somber and gray twilight comes solemnly and
 slow.

How often in the night I waited for you here!

Ah, the lifted face with the white shawl above—
 The sordid, little jokes—the shyness and the fear,
 The confident, brave words and solemn talk of
 love

When in the hollow Vast the early stars grew clear,

The kisses and the prayers,—O all the words we
 said,

Vows of eternal love—all the mad heart could say,
 The glad enthusiasm and hope of youth, all fled!

As a strange man that laughs I look on them
 to-day—

My pitiful, old self, a thing apart and dead.

Do you remember then one night beside the shore

I vowed you all my love! With quiet half-regret,
 Incredulous and sad, you wagered me before

A year had waxed and waned I wholly should
forget
All the words I whispered, and all the vows I swore.

And suddenly the sea was dark and ominous
And with you within mine arms seemed dwindled
to a ghost,
The sorrowful sea-wind grew lonely over us,
Filled with a new vague fear I made my desperate
boast,
Never should this thing be, ah never, never thus!

How you laughed and mocked me, half earnest, half
in jest,
Challenged me by my boast, if it should really be
That all the love were true which I had so confessed,
To leap in as I was into the foaming sea;
And how at last I did, as high as to my breast!

You were not glad at all, but half-surprised I
thought.
You strove to keep your silence mysterious and wise;
Pity would not let you, we kissed and we forgot;
But still I felt it there, deep down behind your
eyes,
The fear we both divined and yet acknowledged not.

Beneath the shading dune we watched the far-off
ships
Wink friendly lights to us, and you grew grave and
still,

Leaning against my heart in feignéd sleep's eclipse
Your eyelids sank, your lips were sad and mute
 until
They curved into a laugh beneath my laughing lips.

Ah do you remember that evening dark and dread!
White lightning to the east along the sea-line
 gleamed;
Sudden with premonition unbearable your head
Sank weeping, while you told me the dream that
 you had dreamed
Of how in a strange wood you found me cold and
 dead.

Weary and fearful, too, I tried my utmost art
To calm you, but your fear took heart at no re-
 lief:
Till in a passionate burst we clung there heart on
 heart,
Each with a wordless sense of some great im-
 minent grief,
A far-off moving fear, to banish us apart,

And hung there heart on heart in impotent dumb pain.
But now the thunderous wrath had darkened all
 the sky,—
We parted (ah, how often!), the long white lines of
 rain
Drenched us. I wound your cloak about to keep
 you dry.
I never saw you more, nor heard your voice again.

Vanished, vanished, vanished, all crumbled with the
years,

All the promise broken and all the dream undone;
Even my love of you sealed with so many tears—

My golden, foolish youth, alas where is it gone!
No voice within replies, no vision reappears.

Lo it is autumn now and all our summer passed
How many autumns gone—the laughter and the
flowers!

Along the immense horizon, sepulchral and vast,
The roof of the world's tomb, for a few days and
hours

Memory beats vain wings, and perishes at last.

Only the infinite Deep, whereon the sea-bird's wing
Sinks wearied, the dark waste of wave on endless
wave,

Fresh with the boundless breath as cool and soft as
Spring,

The solemn fields of sea, holy and green and grave,
Keep their eternal sleep, nor change in anything.

The desert of the sea where no wave lifts a head,
Unflecked by any sail, unfurrowed by a prow,
With light and shade of cloud grows dark and deep
and dread;

Across the shadowy waste, half-tremulously, now
From twilight far above a shimmering light is shed.

Under the heaven of evening cloud beyond cloud afar,
With murmurs thronged and winds, and flecked
with streaks of white,

The somber waters move where sky and cloud-line
are,—

The odor of all the sea is huge within the night;
Within her spray hangs drenched the jeweled even-
ing star.

Still the hand of twilight with darkness strokes and
stills

The somber and immense breast of the swelling
sea,
And the pale hand of dawn across the darkness spills
Her clear and crystal cup of radiant ecstasy—;
The white, immaculate waste of morning sobs and
thrills!

The hurtling crash of foam along her confines hurled
Echoes, her voice is loud beyond the morning
stream.

The sad robe of the sea about the planet curled
Rustles and shines with night and light, gleam
answers gleam
And thunder answers thunder along the throne of the
world.

Autumn is in the air, the windy beach is strewed
With storm-washed weeds and wrecks, and you are
far away.

All things are changed and vanish like a changing
mood,

All things are changed, and pass, and perish in a
day,
Except the enormous Vast and boundless Solitude.

BY THE PAVILION

THE beach was silent in the night,
Covered with mist and gray.
The sea-dunes under the moonlight night
Stretched far away.

From where the grotesque pavilion stood
There came a clapping of hands,
From where the grotesque pavilion stood
Beside the sands.

A tired old accordion
Struck up a sudden tune—
The sound of a squeaky accordion
Under the moon.

With a gay air the player played
The song "Sweet Annie Moore,"
The feet of the player beat, as he played,
The wooden floor.

And to the tawdry, pathetic tune
A murmur of voices sang—
With dancing and laughter the panting tune
Echoed and rang.

A sound of glad, old memories
The quiet music had—
Old human hopes and memories,
Half gay, half sad.

So that, as singing the dancers danced
And the thin music sighed,
My heart leaped up in my breast and danced,
And my heart cried.

For the pavilion and the weak song
Under the starlight seemed
Like something known in a dream, and the song
Like a song dreamed.

And by the shining September sea
I heard in the squalid sound
Something more great than the night or the sea
Reaching around,—

The love that links all men together,
Divided by waves and wars—
The sorrow of all hearts beating together
Under the stars.

SLEEPLESS NIGHT

OUTSIDE the summer earth lies hot and white.
Through the twin windows of the sultry room
Great clots of darkness and deep vistas loom,
And starlit leafage in the breathless night.

And always the vague sea along the coast
Makes moan deliberately with ponderous breath.
The world seems old and tired unto death,
Beneath the sleepless and the starry host.

O now, for the first time, I feel the weight
Of earth's mortality, the bitter bliss
Lying against the lips of life—the kiss
That cloyes me, and the heavy yoke of Fate.

Till patient dawn along the lonely rim
Glimmers up sadly, and the stars retire
Veiling their eyes before the radiant Fire,
And all the world grows windy, bleak and dim.

The hopelessness, the utter, utter pain
Of earth's dear common sorrow breaks my heart.
I bow myself in reverence apart
And take with tears the insatiate lips again.

STORMY DAY

DAY makes white the beaches,
The long, flat, sandy reaches
Shimmer and shine.
Northward the dunes stand crowded,
The sky leans cold and clouded
Along the line.

The sea-wind, wild and veering,
Dips on the waters steering
The waves that roam,
His prow plunges and burrows
And the immaculate furrows
Break into foam.

From heaven to bellowing heaven
 The blast of God is driven
 On waste and wave;
 The billows turning and flashing
 Leap upward together clashing,
 The waters rave.

The fisher-hut here lies tumbled,
 Creaking and wrenched and crumbled
 With the wind that strains.
 The roof of the old pavilion
 Nearby, shines washed vermilion
 From the autumn rains.

Nature is here in fashion
 Wild, and has no compassion
 Toward hearts that stir,
 Storms and sea-winds above her
 She knows not me, her lover
 Is nought to her.

All of the dreams that fill me,
 Stir and delight and thrill me
 She scorns at last.
 All that my heart would utter,
 Aghast, sinks wings that flutter
 Before her blast.

From the heaven to the heaven opposing,
 From the dawn to the night unclosing,
 From deep to height,

On the wide waste unbounded
 No horn or gong is sounded,
 No sail is white.

Cruel and wild and shameless
 Flow the fierce waters tameless,
 The wind that streams;
 The sea-bird rising on their motion
 Screams, and the thunders of the ocean
 Answer his screams.

MOON-DAWN

ALONG the somber east the flower of Night full-blown
 A sad and sacred perfume breathes, and the heavy
 Vast
 The huge odor of the sea fills with a sense unknown
 Of mystery and sleep. Dim twilight hangs aghast,
 With one pale trembling star, unlit from zone to zone.

Bitter and sharp and sweet, stern as all things that
 are,
 The odor of life is here, wet sand and rank seaweed.

The waters, clear and cold, make music from afar—
 Along the low, flat sky recede, recede, recede
 The unwinged wastes of wave beyond the evening
 star.

—from out the darkness now, from the clouds
unfurled

Hidden sword of moonlight strikes on sea and
land.

And sound and light mingle, a breath is whirled
Fraternal through all things, that feel the vibrant
hand,

Harmonious God upon the strings of the world!

Glories! O Light! God! O seraphic Breath!
O Father Supreme! For this one moment now

Thank Thee, thank Thee, thank Thee; I bless Thee
from beneath—

Thank Thee—I cannot say—I cannot tell Thee
how!

Thank you, thou atonest for all things, even death!

NOON

Colors of the sea

White and blazing and blue to the eastward lie.
Waves to the lea

And pale, green grass curve close against the sky;

Is through me like a sigh!

It cries aloud,

Like heaven above heaven circling, steep beyond
deep.

Waves in a crowd

Mer and huddle drowsily, shimmer and sleep.

AUTUMN NIGHT

THE sea is out of breath, her waves are wroth,
Along the dunes I hear them far away;
Against the barriers of the banished day
Night flutters like a vast, ungainly moth.

Around my casement the slow twilight crawls.
My head sinks down upon the table here—
One flickering, flaring candle burning near
Throws shadows on the floor and on the walls,

And the two windows shine out in the gloom
Like clear-cut mirrors. With the August night
A gradual peace subdues me, pure and white,
A holy quiet brooding through the room.

It is as if into a somber deep
My body, drunk with death, sank drowned and lost:
I send my soul forth dimly, like a ghost,
Down the long fields and meadows half-asleep.

Autumn is old and sad, her slumberous noises
Through the shrill starry hours drowse and drone,
All the long evening in a monotone
Up through the window creep her myriad voices.

Now that the tumult and the aching pain
Of earth's dear heart has dwindled into rest,
I, that long ages slept within her breast,
Sink wearied back into her arms again.

MORNING-DREAM

THE moon has set behind the sail, the wind of morning blows,

Like a perfume from the east, or like a breath upon the wave,

Along the east still flowers pale the everlasting rose,
And all the stars of night are drowned within their watery grave.

The Deep is white and chilly like soft moonlight through a cloud.

As the odor of deep music, that still dying never dies,

Is the odor of your hair through which your darling head is bowed,

And the morning on the waters is reflected in your eyes.

Look up, sweet love, and listen to the waters as they rhyme—

Alas what was that angry voice that thundered on the Deep!

The voice of Death behind us where the sea-waves chime and chime,

As voices sound that echo through the silences of sleep.

Is it a dream I dream with you of something that is
passed?

O love, the shining coldness of the morning blows
through me,

While we penetrate, with prow that cuts the waters
vague and vast,

The hyacinthine odors of the fresh and dawnlit sea!

A HYMN FROM THE BEACHES

BETWEEN dune and dune
The sea shimmers bright
With radiant noon
And ponderous light.

Resplendent and vast
It reaches away,
The waves shine aghast
At the spears of day.

In the flame of the firmament
All has gone mad
For delight of his element—
O I am glad!

The winds and the sea,
The grass and the sands
I drink into me—
I reach forth my hands.

Above me and under
I draw with each breath,
Of living, the wonder,
The glory of death.

The waves from the plain
Of the Deep, the dumb sod,
Cry out for the pain
Of unbearable God.

O God, wherever,
Whoever Thou art,
I thank Thee forever
With all of my heart!

For force of sheer love
I fall down at Thy feet!
I feel Thee above,
I bless Thee and greet!

For this that I see,
For all things that are,
Whatever they be,
I thank Thee afar.

Let us all cry in choir,
While wild with delight,
White hymns to Thy Fire
Bright Godhead of light!

Let a holy and thunderous
 Harmony roll
 Over and under us,
 Soul unto soul!

O steadfast and nigh
 In the wave and the sod!
 O holy and high!
 O Father and God!

Let all that was ever
 On earth or the sea
 Make music forever
 And ever to Thee!

SEPTEMBER BY THE SEA

THE melancholy mood of bleak September
 Fills the forsaken beach here by the sea.
 The gray pavilion stares out wearily—
 The old, wrenched seats and railings half remember
 Their summer gayety.

So desolate—so windy—so forsaken—
 A certain homesickness blows on the air.
 The flagless pole seems sorrowful and bare;
 The wind pierces my breast enough to awaken
 The memories sleeping there.

Before his touch the cold sea shines and shivers,
The fallen arbor under which I sit
Sheds all its wrinkled leafage bit by bit;
Through every leaf his breath rustles and quivers,
Shaking and stirring it,

And dips upon the ruffled waters foaming.
In all this desolate waste of dying day
The sand lies bare—they are all gone away,
But one old woman in a blue shawl roaming
The beach windy and gray.

No other life there is, no other motion,
Only the lonely wind blows on and on,
Only in a half-dream I dream upon
The eyes of one I loved, here by the ocean,
How many autumns gone,

Here by these buildings, by these rolling beaches;
The ghosts of many garish summer days
Seem now to haunt them, from the westward blaze
Of the low sun a red beam slants and reaches
The windows with its rays,

Giving them a dull light through the barred shutters.
The bathing-ropes drift on the waves that stir
Where the gay crowds of laughing bathers were.
The beach, listening to a tent-flap that flutters,
Grows dark and drearier.

They are all gone, they will return—ah never —
Summer and joy and the old love of you!
The old woman there gathers her shawl of blue
About her, as if she were going away forever,
And I must follow, too.

ECSTASY

THE sea-wind wails and raves
And dips upon the sea,
The choral hearts of the waves
Dissolve for ecstasy.

And lo—from deep to height
Melodiousness profound,
When odor, sound and light
Intermingle and sound!

A flash of the beautiful strength,
Holy, harmonious God—
Sways the waters at length,
Resonant under His rod.

All at His breath from above
Resounds, blown through and through.
O God—for utter love
I, too, cry out, I, too!

A NIGHT BY THE SEA

A SEA SONG

WHEN the low murmur of the morning's laughter,
Rippling the waves, makes music in my ears—
I dream on vanished things and things hereafter;
So near is laughter to divine, sweet tears.

When in the dawn the last star disappears
And dream on dream withdraws following after—
My heart leaps up with laughter in my ears;
So near is grief to sorrowful, sweet laughter.

When the wind calls and the waves follow after
And dune on dune shimmers and reappears—
I dare not listen to your quiet laughter;
So near is laughter to divine, sweet tears.

A SWIM AT SUNSET

THE heaven opens her stars, and far under the Deep
Tirelessly, wave on wave, labors, where the sun
Left the rim burning, and the lapsing waves one
by one
Subside on the horizon, or swell along the windy
sweep
Of starlit sunset, exultant, and undulating leap
Forward on the prone sea's breast. O visited of
none,

Here beauty broods, where a God, his work being
 done,
 Has slowly withdrawn, like a sad voice fallen on
 sleep!

Now is my body, all feverish, thirsty for the sea.
 Now let my sorrow slip like a robe from my side.
 Stark, I run to the beauty, to the dark embrace.
 O hide me, cover me up, take pity on me
 Infinite waters! Through the huddling of the
 waters I glide
 Seaward forever, nor ever turn backward my
 face.

VISTAS

WHEN the long winds are come sorrowing with
 September

Over the shining sea that moves in a far-off place,
 Over the cold sea-dunes, out of the sunlit space,
 Bowing the meadow-grass,—I remember, I remember,

All the vanished things, and all the old strange days,
 —The piteous childhood heart, the visions long ago,
 The murmur of deep waters where the cool winds
 blow;

I will follow them calling, down the autumnal ways.

When the old years fade into the woods of September:

—The voice of the wind's moan, crying, "You may not go,"

—The voice of the wave's sob, crying, "You cannot know,"

—The childhood heart crying, "I remember, I remember!"

MOONLIGHT NIGHT

Ah, though I were a ghost,

To-night I should fare forth under the host

Of the immaculate stars

To seek you. Though beyond the utmost bars

Of the world's bourne you were,

Though hid beyond the Morning's flaming hair

And the bowed Twilight's head—

On such a night, though I were doomed and dead,

I should arise, alas,

And seek for you, between the dewy grass

And the pale, marble moon

Wandering, for sake of that remembered June.

The inviolate fields of space

Should know my spirit hungering for your face,

Plains where no leafage yields

Scant shadow; though the radiant moonlit fields

And meadows half-asleep

I should go gliding, and on the starry Deep,

My cerements drenched with dew,

With the immense, clear winds blown through and through,

Star beyond burning star
And mile on moonlit mile of waves afar,
Drift like a cloud. Perverse,
Through all the impersonal and void universe
Still would I seek that refuge, which is you.

Ah, and when I should come
To one low window where, in dreams and dumb,
You leaned for a short space,
Feeling the nightwind cool upon your face
And the cold moonlight clear—
So human and so selfish and so dear,
So careless and so strong!—
After all the long years and hours long
Of bodiless dead things,
Would not my soul yearn upward to the springs
Of your sweet flesh, and all
The love within me cling to you and call,
Laying for the old sake
Against your lips poor ghostly lips that ache—
And on your forehead lay
A somber kiss, from one far, far away!

THE SOUND OF THE SEA

ALWAYS here where I sleep I hear the sound of the sea,
Rolling along the dunes, along the desolate places,
Full of a memory vague of dreams and remembered
faces.
Always here where I sleep I hear the sound of the sea.

So have I heard it sound for twenty summers or more,
 Roaring up through the meadows between the
 illuminate houses,
 Up through the starry fields where the black herd
 sleepily browses.
So have I heard it sound for twenty summers or more.

Ever that sound it has, always, whenever I hear it.
 Sometimes it makes me happy, remembering days
 that were glad
 And full of the breath of June, sometimes it makes
 me sad—
Ever that sound it has, always, whenever I hear it.

Under quivering stars and stars that were clouded and
 scattered,
 All through my moments of joy and pain, of sleep-
 ing and dreaming,
 Always that quiet murmur sorrowfully was stream-
 ing,
Under quivering stars and stars that were clouded and
 scattered,

Out of that somber voice swept on the wings of Time,
 Shall I not, bending down from the starry trellis of
 heaven,
 Look on this empty room, these meadows shining
 and even—
Out of that somber voice swept on the wings of Time!

"O it is still unchanged, all that I loved and knew—
The sound of the sea, the dunes, the house where
once I lay sleeping,
The room that bounded my love, my laughter and all
my weeping,
O it is still unchanged, all that I loved and knew."

Beyond what glittering stars and in what ultimate
regions
Drifted along with the night, shall I look back and
ponder
On the forgotten sound, the earth, and the ancient
wonder—
Beyond what glittering stars and in what ultimate
regions!

II

POEMS OF PITY

*In the morning with scorn I looked out from my tower
of dreams on the world,*

At noon I went down among men.

*When dark was the west and the wings of the twilight
were furled*

I went up to my tower again

*Humbly, with holier dreams, made grave by the pain
of the world.*

THE FANATIC

You call me mad, and if I am
It was a God that made me so—
His fiery truth within my heart
Has burnt its life out long ago.

You, comrade, laughing down the street,
And you with wearier eyes, alas—
I have a message for you each—
I catch your garments as you pass.

O listen to me—let me speak!
This thing I know, and truly know:
Through love for one another, *love*—
We must be saved, and only so.

TO ONE ASLEEP

OUTSIDE the thunders of the city fade,
You too at last, lapped in the great release,
Lean back shut lids; slowly all sounds decrease.
The mystery of sleep makes me afraid.—
Are these the arms that about my heart were laid,
Are these the lips that clung, the fingers these!
So deep a division the disdainful peace
Of temporal death between us two has made.

Even as Death, into some world above me
He has called you up beyond my utmost love.
O sweet, where are you, alas where are you fled!
Yet will I not call you back again to love me,
Nor waken you from that high peace, above
These little fears, these sorrows uncomforted.

LOVE

Love, plain and general as our daily bread,
In all men dwells; there is no heart so dead,
There is no breast so pitiless but love
Has there some little dwelling, the white dove
Hallows with hovering wings all hearts alive.
Over all souls that sicken, or that survive,
Equally over the sordid and the sublime,
The starriest beauty and the loathliest crime
His healing shadow falls holy and grave.
All tawdry and all common human things
Smile up bravely under the yearning wings,
So tremulous and so tentative to save.
There is no villain and no petty knave,
There is no face so barren, or so vile;
But has been glorified some little while
By the clear light reflected from Love's eyes
And from no face that glory wholly dies:
Not easily stars sink from their abode
Where they have whirled in the eternal skies,
Nor the soul dustward that has been with God.

TO NO. 42, WHO DECLARED HE WAS THE
CHRIST

Now in the streets the clangor and the riot
Fade dimly off like murmurings half aloud.
Through the barred windows the long shadows
crowd.

In the asylum alcove here deep quiet
Hangs like a heavy cloud.

Your head, face downward, in the bed lies sunken,
Your thin clenched hand shows sorrowful and white;
Sad brother, in the melancholy light,
Like one who has wrestled with an angel, drunken
You sink into the night.

Lo—in the Void the irradiate eyes grow holy,
Equally over the sordid and the sublime,
The starriest beauty and the loathliest crime,
The healing shadow of night sinks downward slowly,
The radiant planets climb,

Shedding an equal glory on all created.
Each from his separate pain finds separate peace;
May you, too, now regain a lost release
From the fierce rapture your spirit has consecrated,
Even your deep disease,

Of baleful days and moon-wild riotous vision—
Seraphic suns—shadows of crawling fears—
And that high dream even madder than your tears,
Your unshakable faith, flawless through the derision
And mockery of your peers.

Lean back your head, sleep, let their shallow jeering
Die of itself, that are too vain to weep!

What know they of your mysteries dumb and deep,
The inner, triumphant tongues beyond all hearing?
—Lean back your head and sleep.

Yea, it is hard, knowing yourself the Master,
Even the Christ to the new world reborn,
Through the long ward to trail in robes forlorn.
Yea, it is hard, knowing yourself the Master,
To endure the incredulous scorn

Of every gibbering mouth. The immortal Mother,
Sad friend, has led you on with no fostering hand
And set you in that melancholy band
Whose desolate eyes speak weariness. O brother!—
Could you but understand

With what new mystery I bend above you,
Seeing you helpless, all your grief laid bare—
The uncrowned Christ fallen and helpless there—
What new, swift pity forces me to love you, |
What love wild as despair!

I, I at least, acknowledge you, and kneeling
One moment, touch your garment's fold again
Reverent, and with no sense of malice then;
Love, in your face to me the Christ revealing,
A dreamer among men.

TO AN "OLD MAID"

Love, like the stars and flowers,
That fades in season due—
Shall, like the stars and flowers,
Somewhere come back to you.

The morning-stars that pale
When the gray night grows old,
Night, when the day grows pale,
Gives back a thousandfold.

For each last flower on earth
The Spring shall bring back two,
And love you lost on earth
Somewhere shall come to you.

THE WOMAN IN THE CAFÉ

WITHIN the corner of a dim café
A painted woman sat with lips of pain.
The heat and noontide of the sultry day
Beat on the stone outside and glanced again,
Like rays of fiery rain.

Her hand was at her chin, her sullen eyes
Looked fixedly into the dazzled street,
And the shrill hum within of clustering flies
Mixed with the weary shuffling sound of feet
Outside, in the pale heat.

The chair of her companion for a space
 Stood empty, in a rapt and dreaming mood
Curved the coarse lines about her mournful face,
 Of petty cares and questionings withstood,
 And murdered maidenhood.

And in my heart I heard as in a dream
 The warning of the prophets and the priests,
And ominous wrath of the outraged Supreme,—
 Echoes from Nineveh gone down in feasts,
 And the struggle up from the beasts.

And all the holy dreams whereby men live,
 And in my soul the cry of all the creeds,
And the sad Gods, that perish and forgive,
 Rang,—and a deeper cry that all exceeds
 Of the human heart that bleeds.

O sacred heart—O dauntless and alone!
 How have you dragged your godhead in the dust!
O soul of Man what is this you have done!
 Rise, smite with love the tragic head of lust,
 O somber and august!

O wonderful and pitiable and sad!
 For the first time since first my days began
I feel the aching pity, blind and mad,
 To gather to my heart—to clasp and span
 The whole sad heart of man!

But while these voices through my spirit sped
A strange transfiguration for a space
Made her eyes quiet, and a sorrow spread
About her lips, the pain of all the race
Made holy in her face,—

With a new look, half woman and half girl.
So that I saw her as a little child
Romping with tangled tresses all a-curl;
And now, as one from a deep dream beguiled,
Not knowing it, she smiled.

Mother of many little ghosts! Dear bride
Of every nameless stranger! O sad breast
Where many a little unborn soul has died,—
What joyous thought, what memory, what jest
Thus stirred your deep unrest!

Was it perhaps the story that some friend
Told you, beneath the glances of four eyes,
Some vision of the long day-journey's end,
Pathetic joy at the near-promised prize
For your sad merchandise?

Poor little cheated spirit—was it these,
Or a new thought of some diviner goal,
Some hope more splendid than the body's ease,
The thunder of deep longings such as roll
Through every human soul?

Alas, how like we are, all men, alas—

Bared to the soul. O' if we all but knew
The kindred soul behind each face we pass,
How Love would cry and run to greet it, too,
Even as mine to you!

Seeing you then devoid of wile and lure,
Pathetic, silent, stripped of every art;
No more the careless, hollow paramour,
But something half-maternal and apart,
The tired woman's heart.

We are not so divided as we seem,
'Neath petty hates, the war of "mine and thine,"
Broods a vast, common sorrow,—the vague dream
And holy pain of life, a branded sign
On all men's souls divine,

The soul of Man within the souls of men—.
For all we share the triumph and the doom,
All we rose from the dust, and all again
Hasten, through love and longing, to the tomb.
—Our lips meet in the gloom.

Poor, helpless heart, bedraggled in the dust,
How little have they loved you, little known,
Who crucified you on the cross of Lust—
And made of you a horror to atone
Some vileness of their own!

Yet you are human—yes, and holy still;
 Within you, violated, still there strives
The hope of all the race, the vital will,
 The mother-love (the source of all that lives,)
 That sorrows and forgives.

The will that moves the stars within the Deep,
 The force behind the city's roar and din
Within your body, like an angel, sleeps;
 Nor may Man mar with wantonness and sin
 What God has breathed therein.

Wherefore the tawdry and half-comic clothes,
 The gay café and garish lights appear
Like tragic irony, the snowy rose
 Against your breast, so virginal and clear,
 Is like a mockery, dear.

O Love, what word have you to say for this!
 O patient Love, barred 'round with many bars!
O Love each day betrayed with the Judas kiss!
 O to catch up and clasp all hurts and scars,
 All grief under the stars!

To suffer for the good of all that lives
 And in one's body feel the bitter spear,
The aching palms, the spirit that forgives,
 The thorny forehead lifted hot and sear
 In the starry twilight clear!

To be destroyed, torn down and sacrificed
For the old doom that all the stars rehearse,
To drain the somber ecstasy of a Christ—
O to crush out with arms of love the curse
Of the vast universe!

The cold indifference of man to man,
The lovelessness, the war of class with class,
The hatred, which has made since Time began
Such creatures as yourself to come to pass,
Poor heart, alas, alas!

Not in new laws and creeds we put our trust,
But in the triumph and the truth of *love*—
Not thoughts or things shall raise man from the dust,
But *love* for one another, earthly *love*,
Divine and common *love*.

Now the long streets and squalid alleys seem
To fade away and leave me all alone.
Behind them I discern the immortal Dream,
The Love that moulded car-track, street and stone,
And in all veins makes moan.

The holy pain of life, the vast desire
And common human sorrow seize my heart,
I rise with rapture, as on wings of fire,
Into the heaven of heavens, far apart,
Lifted, with singing heart,

After the tireless feet of Love, that climbing
 Star beyond star into the dizziest height
 And loneliest marge still echo upward chiming,
 Star beyond star, into the infinite night,
 Still higher toward the light.

Think not, dear sordid heart, I condescend
 From this high dream with you to sympathize.
 Nay—rather from the heaven of life you bend
 Downward to me, through you into the skies
 Of love, through you, I rise.

O may this rapture soar like a swift prayer
 To the great Love that broods behind all fate,
 For all vain human sorrow everywhere,
 To crush out of the world this curse of hate
 That makes men desolate!

I am drowned out amid the eternal Wonder,
 Caught up and rapt into a fiery place—
 My single self, in the great Self gone under,
 Falters, but through me pleads one burning space
 The voice of the whole race!

TO A LITTLE CHILD

IN the cold eastern zone
 The twilit stars hang low,
 Come little bird, my own—
 Why wilt thou linger so;
 Heaven rings with the starry chime,
 It is the twilight time.

Heaven looks into the sea
With all her starry eyes,
Each slumbering dune and tree
Pale in the starlight lies;
No sound in the world is heard,
Come little tired bird!

Why wilt thou turn away
And hide thine eyes in fright,
Art thou so fond of day!
Art thou afraid of night!
The flowers hang their heads.
The birds are in their beds.

Night sinks upon the Deep,
Upon the vasty stream,
In the wide fields of sleep
Are many flowers of dream;
No sound in the world is heard,
Come little tired bird!

SONG AT TWILIGHT

Close to the highest, loneliest face of heaven
The flaming candles of the stars are pressed,
Now are you tired because the day is done,
And twilight heaves more softly in your breast,
Grown weary of the sun.

The eyelids of the world droop full and drowsy,
But the irradiate eyes shine far above her,
The tumult and the ancient struggles cease;
The wars that Beauty wages on her lover
Dwindle into a peace.

Stretch out your arms along the surging twilight.
Lean back your head and sigh along the Deep;
Here on the misty marge of life and death
There is no turmoil. Silence falls asleep
Between your breath and breath.

The helplessness of sleep fills me with pity,
Even more than death, more lovable, more dear.
What care have you for all things passed and done,
Mournful or glad! Here in the twilight here
They vanish and are gone.

All passionate things and all things great and joyous,
Even they, too, must tire and fade away,
Even the heart grows dumb and cannot weep—
But leaning on the ebbd and fallen day
Sleeps, and is glad of sleep.

For in the end all things are grave and holy,
And Love, whose thought was laughter and no other,
Above her lips with tears and kisses glad
Shine out the eyes of the undaunted mother,
Prophetical and sad.

TO THE MORNING-STAR

THERE is a tear upon your lashes, star!
Is it for all humanity's old pain,
Her sorrows and her longings vast and vain,—
O holy and seraphic morning-star,
Is it for all her longings vast and vain!

Open your lids and close them once again
In the immortal heavens where you are,
And let it fall upon us from afar,
A tear of pity from beyond all pain,—
O holy and seraphic morning-star!

ENVOI

THE poet is one whose pity is ever new,
And whose hands are wistful to mould vague beauty
and make
Into glad beauty all things unbeautiful too,—
The world-heart yearns, the woods and the waters
ache.

All scorned and pitiable things, all futile things
Lift up their heads and look. Look up, be not sad!
His hand is out, and the scorned and the futile sings
With a grave, still voice and a voice that is almost
glad.

III

MISCELLANEOUS

*The old familiar Beauty
Caressed by the world's dead hands,
Beauty, so old and weary,
Beloved of a thousand lovers,
Worn with a thousand kisses,
—Surprising—beneficent—holy—
Comes to us all in the end.*

POETRY

SLEEPING, again I felt it—
The terrible Loveliness
Draw near, the rhythmical body
Exuberant with excess.

The august and insolent beauty
With splendor of regal strides
Moved, the magnificent bosom
Where heave the immortal tides!

Upon my face I felt it
Again, the gorgeous hair,
The beautiful, stately stature
Bown down across me there.

THE LOST LAND

TUMULT is in the west, and wild voices calling,
The old, barbaric voices calling that will not rest;
Therefore my heart is glad, I am strong, I shout
with the west
And follow with tears and laughter where the leaves
are falling.

The dun cattle roam where the wind bows down the
grass,
The swallows leap on the wind, and shift and follow
and stray
Over the long dunes to the land of the heart far
away
Calling: and in my veins a voice cries out where they
pass.

I remember the house—the sorrow long ago
In the first widening dawn of the world, the quiet
face
Lost ere the first sea sang, or the wind,—the lonely
place
Beyond the white-capped sea, where the winds and
waters go.

Therefore I, too, am glad,—I shout aloud with the
earth,
I am made one with her winds and waves, and in my
breast
The fierce elemental voices crying down the west—
The lust for some far land and meadows lost at birth!

I will laugh on the hills, shout where the days depart!
Death cannot quench my course, or stay me with
his hand;
I shall spring from the dust again toward the long-
lost land,
As the lithe swallow springs when autumn cries in the
heart.

Beyond the long gray clouds the winds walk in the west.

The dun cattle pause with strained-out throats and stray,

Where the swallows leap on the wind, and shift, and follow away

Calling, calling. O, the voices will leave no rest!

I will laugh on the hills, gird myself up for my race.

Yea, thou art very fair, thou art strong,—but O earth, O my mother,

The cry deep in the heart not all the years can smother,

The old, strange pang, the voices,—the lost place!

JUSTIFICATION

ABOUT me all the flickering loveliness

Of life, with love and death irradiate,

Tortures my heart continually to create

Some proof thereof out of her own excess:

Lest there be left out of my deep distress

No dream to justify my desolate

And beauty-haunted hours, my love and hate,

And all my spirit trembles to express.

Sorrow alone is bearable through this,

That I may sing its beauty as it is,

And joy that is not uttered is not joy;

The mournful doom of life is not to be borne,

Can I not shout my ringing defiance of scorn

Once, ere the Fates deflower me and destroy!

THE POET AND THE YOUNG GIRL

POET:

Though you know many things, you cannot know
The longing on my lips that makes them wail
For earth's huge beauty when the storm-winds blow,
When dawn makes the vast waters pure and pale:
All Loveliness I serve with love and duty,
Your beauty scorns the tenderness of Beauty.

GIRL:

Why will you waste the wonder of your Youth
In mirrored visions of a vain delight!
I am the vision carved into truth,
I am the poem that you could not write:
I am the Power that you made the song for,
Within me lies the secret that you long for.

POET:

Though all the modes and meanings of creation
Within your arms grew voluble and clear,
Still lurks in them a deeper revelation,
Still cries a voice, "Beyond—it is not here!"
To life that perishes you are the portal.
I am the pathway to the life immortal!

FROM ANY ORLANDO TO ANY ROSALIND

AH, Rosalind the boy-like clothes
How futile are they and how fair—
The locks are short, but what red rose
Lurks beneath the hidden hair?
O maid-like, maid-like fair!

What unknown thing is there to fear
In this boy-face and boy-like eyes;
Come close to me, look up, draw near—
And is it pity in them lies?
O woman's, woman's eyes!

THE NEW LOVE

BEFORE the morning I arose and went
Over the snowy meadows clear and cold,
And with the dawn a deep and new content
Awoke in me. Farewell, dear love of old.

Now that I love you, what is there to say!
Who would have harmed you, what shall now be
said!
The morning wind has purged it all away.
Before this love all the old lusts lie dead.

The holier love more deep than all desire
Into my spirit from the morning came,
Out of the sacred and the whitening Fire
It rose within me like a silent flame;

And the winds blew it to me from the west,
Over the sad fields of unbroken snow,
Patient and pure as your own naked breast
And hopeless as our love of long ago.

"FOR EVERY SOUL IS ALONE"

Lonely the soul is, though from east to west
 She fly the phantom following without rest—
 Loneliness lurks amid the thickest crowd,
 A loneliness more deep than solitude,
 Deep loneliness at the belovèd breast.

TO THE FORGOTTEN

DEAR tragic women of our foolish youth,
 Where are you now, alas, where are you gone!
 For all the perjured promises, the untruth,
 How shall we ever answer or atone?

All woman, and half angel, and half fiend,
 Incredulous through experience, having proved—
 O you, on whom our fledgling longing leaned
 In the first mystery of being loved!

O sisters, comforters—patient and so wise,
 Dear listeners to young words of love and pain!
 That kissed like a mother the sorrows from our eyes,
 Smiling at the brave vows, so old and vain.

PARIS TO HELEN AFTER THE ABDUCTION

WHY will you turn about and look so sadly!
 Why are your lips so discontent and curled!
 O hold me, kiss me, till this fear be gone

The blind wind rustles through the mast-head madly,
The prow is anxious and the sail unfurled
For the pale fields beyond the starlit zone,
And the unfurrowed sea beckons us on.

O I have dreamed of this in ages gone!
O I have sought these lips across the world!
Why will you give them to me now so sadly—
The blind wind wafts us on the waters gladly—
O found at last! O prisoned! O my own!

THE VAMPIRE

GRAY night ghost-like waned at dawn,
The pale, green sky curved like a lawn
With stars aflower;
So she lifted up her head
And waited, bending by the bed,
The stroke of the hour.

Her rigid throat and temples white
Showed sickly in the pallid light,
Sickly and stark;
And all her mouth, for a short while
Parted and pausing in a smile,
Was wet and dark.

Dawn—! In a last, mad throe of love
Her red lips drained him bending above.—

The moment after
With sudden pity she turned, and then
The gusty wind blew back again
A dwindling laughter.

MUSIC

WHEN from beyond the far horizons of the world
The first faint dawning voices of the soul proceed,
I endure the pain of things primal and unknown
And gird up my spirit and follow where they lead.

I endure the pain of things importunate and vague,
Beckoning and dim, that make the poor heart bleed.
O voices beyond birth! O lost when I was born!
I gird up my spirit and follow where you lead.

LARMERETTA

Nor all the sound now of the full sea's flowing
Can move you to any laughter or any tears,
Nor voice in the waving wood when the wind is
blowing
Fill you again with the old, vague fears,—
Nor life going, going.

Because you had done with them all and were very
tired,—

And turned with large sighs toward the West,
And all the hope wherewith your heart was fired
Fell, and all that you knew and loved the best,
And all that you desired, desired.

For at the sound of your weeping, at the sound of your
crying,
The veiled God bowed out of the silent land,
And drew you close to his breast, where your white
breast lying
Faint on the inexorable breast that cannot under-
stand,
Leans to him sighing, sighing.

MORNING SLEEP

“Your love is dead!” a voice cried out to me
When morning’s dusk was deep.
“My love is dead,” my heart rang wearily:
But I was fain of sleep.

I could not care. Pain vanished with my dreams
Into the dark withdrawn:
O all we love, how far away it seems
In the pale sleep of dawn!

DISCONTENT

*As often through the beloved eyes there glow
 The eyes of one beloved long ago—
 The spirit and the lips kiss different faces:
 So through the world of ocean, earth and air
 I wander homesick, always, everywhere
 Reminded of dim worlds and distant places.*

It is not sorrow that has made me sad,
 Or fear wherewith the spirit's wings grow weak,
 Here where your lashes tremble on my cheek,
 And the high stars look infinite and glad,
 And the heart yearns to speak.

It is not these, but having sought an hour,
 A little hour of silence and of rest,
 With a grave face to hide the aching west,
 That unassuaged a deep desire should flower
 Even now within my breast,

And I should dream as one, that having drifted
 Out of some old-world star into this new,
 Might dream of a lost face more fair to view—
 And feel in the grave eyes toward his uplifted
 Another's shining through.

MEMORY

MEMORY makes no thoughtful life rejoice,
 She is a siren and a dangerous voice
 Luring us back along the dear, dead way,
 When we should forward march and breast the day.

She is a somber and a mournful cry
 Out of the waning and the sunset sky.
 The universe between her breath and breath
 Remembers some lost thing, and brings forth death;
 Through the dark door remembering she goes,
 And the dust swallows up the withered rose.

THE GREAT LOVER

SHE looked in death as in the bridal-swoon:
 What if she were but wearied out with bliss,
 And death but the love-sleep on the face of Life,
 The bride-sleep after some immortal kiss!

AN OLD SONG

My sister, my spouse, is as a secret spring,
 A fountain of light under the brows of the morn,
 A garden of quiet rest;
 Under her side the melancholy sorrowing
 Of ancient sadness is, and under her breast
 The joy of the unborn.

My flower, my love, is as a shining star,
 As a young rose hid in the windy grass,
 A shout in the land of death—,
 The mournful beauty of all sad things that are,
 A passionate and unavailing breath,
 A soft "Alas."

O my sister, my dove, is as a bundle of myrrh,
 A house of delights, a garden of pleasant length,
 A shady and pleasant tree;
 Her breast is the mansion of certain dreams that were,
 And her sad breast a promise of things to be,
 A sorrowful strength!

As a cool wood is my own, my sister, my dove,
 A giver of life, a gate to the land of breath,
 A stooping and shady cloud;
 As a sad secret bared for the eyes of love,
 A futile defiance, sorrowful and proud,
 Of ancient Death.

TO A BRIDE

WHEN in the moment of your greatest joy
 Your heart is drunken, and immense and free
 Reaches before you the wide heaven of joy,
 Remember me.

When your heart fails you and you cannot bear
 The thought of all the little days to be,
 When in the evening you are very tired,
 Remember me.

O in the bridal chamber in his arms,
 When your breast heaves with music like the sea,
 When all the world is banished and forgot,
 Remember me!

When on your death-bed you shall lie, and all
 Your memory ebbs to the great Memory—
 When on some other breast you lean at last,
 Ah then, remember me.

ON THE TOMB OF A LOVER

HUSH—the ancient sea has a sound of sighing,
 Kissing sadly shadowy dunes and headlands,
 Far around the solitudes moaning, moaning,
 Here where his tomb is.

Now the heart is still and the eyes are heavy,
 Mute the mouth and empty the breast of dreaming.
 All the laughter out of the lips is vanished,
 Aye—and the longing!

Never, never now will he hear the rain fall
 Never now the beautiful arms embrace him,
 When again he wearies of peace and slumber,
 Here by the ocean.

TO THE MODERN MAN

FROM mysteries of the Past
 The Future is prophesied.
 The Actual comes and goes
 Like shadows on a tide.

Realities come and go
 Like shadows on a pool—,
 The leaves are for the wise man,
 The shadows for the fool.

Out of the moment Now
 Rises the god To-Be,
 The light upon his brow
 Is from eternity.

Leave dreaming to the fool
 And take things as they are;
 All things are in yourself,
 Who stand upon a star

And look upon the stars,
 And yearn with deepening breath—
 All things are in yourself—
 Love and Life and Death.

REBIRTH

THE soul at last
 Throned on the stars,
 Forgets the past
 And the old wars.

Deep in the night
 Beyond regret,
 Throned on the height
 It can forget.

Till a new breast
Cry out with love,
Then vague unrest
Stirs it above.

Till face to face
Two lovers cling;
From the high place
With sorrowing,

With fire and thunder
Dethroned and rent,
For the old wonder
All discontent,

Height over height
It burns and sighs
For the old light
In the old eyes—

And cannot rest,
High in the Vast,
Till a new breast
Beat loud and fast,

Till a new womb
Conceive on earth;
Then, through the gloom
Of a new birth,

From its high source
It runs again
The fiery course
And path of pain.

SORROW AND DAWN

ONE molten star
Hangs in the web of dawn,
Cloud beyond cloud withdrawn
Afar.

The earth, the trees
Windless, wait meek and dumb
The new-born day to come.
O peace!

O peace, O pain!
Must each new patient morrow
Wake the irrevocable sorrow
Again!

THE INSPIRATIONS

*Not dawn folds with the stars up in the skies
The sleepless lids of the eternal eyes.*

THE sleepless Beauties, like the sun and rain,
Vanish, and come again;
Yet but a little bear,
And though you cannot find them anywhere,—
Suddenly breaks the blue,
The eternal rhythm glides—
Around, above, beneath you, on all sides,
Loves shines through!

MEMORIES OF FIRST LOVE

WHEN through long sorrows vainly passed
Of many faces, first and last,
Of women loveless proved,
We turn back to the first we loved;
The dear, first face, first kissed, first held
'Twixt wondering hands all love-compelled,
To the old homesickness unquelled
Slowly the heart is moved.

A LAST CRY

THE world is full of horror, death, and crime,
And hearts in prison, or of walls, or pain;
But once in all the years there was a time
When we, with thrilling souls that seemed to strain
Beyond all death, had caught up—not in vain—
The whole of life and uttered it sublime.

Your laughter, the imperious demand
Of fearless eyes, your beauty's tidal breath
Was like a shout heard in a lonely land,
A challenge, a defiance of old death,
That loving we had trampled underneath
With laughter; but you could not understand.

I thirst for you as one that for fresh springs
Thirsts in the deserts of Eternity,
My soul to yours across the desert rings—

'Mid myriad forms to you alone I flee—

O without you who hold the mystery
How shall I front the mystery of things?

Both we move toward the everlasting tombs

And unto us the keys of life are given—

O heart on heart amid the encircling glooms

To challenge the eternities, yea even

One soul complete strip off the veils of heaven,
And lift Life's voice amid the eternal Dooms!

But this shall never be, we shall depart

To the great general Source from which we came,
In separate lands to slumber far apart:

It will all be as nothing, as a name

That writhes away within the withering flame,
Or an old memory in a mouldering heart.

'Mid sun, and moon, and meteor that careens

In the immense, immortal firmament,

Pregnant of æons, womb of might-have-beens,

This cry that from my soul to yours is sent

Once, ere all life and death and love are blent
And lost forever—ponder what it means!

And now, as when through ranks on either side

The swaying weight is borne with ponderous tread,
Before man's general mystery sanctified

All eyes are bowed, and every sullen head

Stands bared, so do you now before Love dead
Bow down your eyes a little, without pride.

In sorrow laid at rest I brood above you.

This love of mine you cannot ever know.

Toward the sweet eyes and lips and wonder of you

I bend, as in the days of long ago.

I kiss you, and renounce you, and forego,

Hushing myself forevermore. I love you.

SONGS OF THE WORLDLING

THE world of love is still the same

In east-land, or in west:

Night and stars and meeting eyes

And a beating breast,

Dreams at dawn and bitter fear

When all the world lies dumb,

Ecstasy, and memories

Through the years to come!—

Though I roam the whole world over;

Be it bad, or mad,

Love is so where'er I go,

Glad, and very sad.

"The eyes of every woman look alike

When she is in your arms—"

EVERY face of every woman

That I ever kissed

Had the eyes of my first love,

When we came to tryst.

Though her eyes were not the same,
In the starry glow
They were like the eyes of her
I loved so long ago.

Though she have another name,
From east-land, or from west,
When a woman's in your arms
She is like the rest.

And the eyelids, and the mouth,
And the look she had
Of the vanished, banished love,
Made me glad and sad.

LOVE'S RESURRECTION

I MURDERED Love and crucified it,
Nailed and left it to its doom.
I tore it down and buried it
Deep in the tomb.

I rolled the stone across the door,
My fingers slipped, the heavy stone
Crushed my hand, but never my lips
Escaped a moan.

I rolled the stone across the door.
Singing, singing, I went away,
Free of heart, free of heart,
At dusk of day.

On the third morrow it arose
And walked abroad beneath the stars,
The brows were lovely as the Christ's
And crowned with scars.

Stooping at dusk from behind to kiss me,
Weeping I heard a voice that said,
"Lo it is I, lo it is I!
Be not afraid."

I counted all its wounds thrice over,
And as I wept beholding so,
It comforted me, and whispered me,
"I know, I know."

I hung to it and clung to it
And sobbed for sorrow fierce and wild.
It murmured, "Was it yourself you slew,
My child, my child!"

THE VOICE OF THE SPRING

In May-time when the first few lilacs flower,
At night, in the lamp-lit street, can I forget
A girl's voice heard from a near leafy bower,
"No, sweetheart, not my lips, not yet, not yet!"

'Twas twilight and the very houses even
Seemed touched with an influence amorous and dear;
The earth, the bride of the dim, starry heaven,
Half-tremulously fluttered with a vague fear.

O Life, even so with many a vain evasion,
 Pleadings and tears, unquestioningly on
 From cheeks, eyes, lips, you press with sweet per-
 suasion

Even to the heart, till the dear deed be done!

Not all the choirs of the Creation pleading
 Can stay your tireless progress—bloom and bud—
 The virginal Spring with half-shy lips conceding
 Surrenders all, for the sweet general good.

The lilacs in the twilight were in flower
 And the air wild with Spring—, can I forget
 A girl's voice heard from a near leafy bower,
 "No, sweetheart, not my lips, not yet, not yet!"

"THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH"

I HAVE sown tares and been the harvester
 Of plenteous grain with sickle and with knife;
 Lo, I have sinned and for my wages were
 Not bitter death, but everlasting life.

At night, rebellious and in bitterness,
 With a small heart I plotted evil things.
 His dawn for a reproach of tenderness
 Lightened me with the wonder of her wings.

I sought the evil and I found the good.
 I prayed for lust and I was given love,
 And when I cursed Him in a sullen mood
 He sent His stars upon me from above.

TO THE AVERAGE MAN

How can you rust your flesh with ulcerous ills
And wreak upon yourself a sensual wrong,
When lowing cattle on a thousand hills
Take the dumb death to make your body strong!

'Mid lurid city and in loathesome den
Eternal spirits work for you and wake,
And all the hearts of all the world of men
Are laboring on together for your sake.

The cloth and very garment that you wear
Against your heart, in distant lands afar
Was wrought by hearts more agèd in despair—,
How shall you answer them for what you are?

Will you return them nothing for all this!
For factories, wheels, and grim machineries whirled,
Sages that plumb for you the huge Abyss,
And the vast Science of the modern world,

Heroes and warriors that for you have bled,
Farmers tilling the stubble field and stone,
The austere host of the heroic dead
Who cleared the way and wrought for you alone.

Your mother bore and bred you at her breast
With holy longing and with patient pain—
And the dawn wakes you, and the stars give rest;
Shall all these influences be in vain!

The prophets and the poets and the sages
For *you* have triumphed over hate and lust,
And groaned for *you* the irrevocable ages—,
How dare you turn and grovel in the dust!

EPITAPH

Two lovers had I, Life and Death,
That followed me forever—
Alas but Life grew out of breath.
Death's footstep falters never.

Fain had I turned to kiss with Life,
But Death he followed faster—
Life is my lover and my dear,
But Death, he is my master.

CREDO

BEFORE I pass through the eternal Portal
One thing I feel is true, because I must—,
That Beauty for some reason is immortal,
Although her face go sorrowing in the dust.

Even death itself is but a crown of flowers
About her brows, immortalizing death.
Before I pass into the silent hours
This thing I cry, and with my latest breath.

NOW

HERE is the place, the time
Is Now, in which to act,
The imagined and sublime
Prove it a glowing fact!

There is no bounding wall
Between you and the stars,
Nor anything at all
That binds you and debars.

Eternities behind,
Eternities before,
The endless cycles wind
Converging at your door.

The irrevocable ages
Have set you in this place,
And all the seers and sages
Have starward turned your face.

The generations banished
For you have sought the goal,
And all the prophets vanished
But prophesied your soul.

Rise then, the chance is splendid,
Will rightly, and be strong!
The act is quickly ended,
But the fixed fate is long.

The choirs of all Creation
 Echo forever still,
 "Your doom, or your salvation
 Depends on your own will."

CRADLE-SONG

SLEEP—now the day is done
 The dreams within your breast
 Grow wearier one by one,
 And turn them to their rest.

Sleep, like sweet honey, lies
 Between your parted lips
 And down your folded eyes
 Sleep draws his finger-tips.

What little tremors creep
 About your eyelids sealed?
 Sweet dreams spring in your sleep
 Like flowers in a field!

Sweet dreams hang on your sleep
 Like perfumes on a flower!
 The little screech-owls weep.
 It is the lonely hour.

Star upon star grows bright
 In the pale western zone,
 Trembling for sheer delight—
 Little love-bird—O my own!

I love you, I cannot say,
 I cannot tell you how—
 I love you all the day,
 And now I love you, *now!*

The stars with all their eyes
 Watch you through all the hours.
 Sleep on your eyelids lies
 Like starlight on the flowers.

YOUTH

ONCE into my chamber broke a silent figure,
 Full of many wounds, each a kiss of mine;
 Patient were the lips, it bared to me the spear-wound,
 Counted all its scars over, one by one.

Christ-like was the face, the eyes were like a demon's,
 Deep within them burned all my ancient lust:—
 Then I knew 'twas he, my Youth that I had murdered;
 I it was who put the spear into his side.

WINTER NIGHT

AROUND me where I stood all windless lay
 Vast polar regions keen with snow and pale,
 And crystal, arctic regions, where, like nuns,
 The cruel stars with glittering eyes and cold
 Preached the stern doctrine of eternal law,
 Inexorable, inevitable to be.

Strange horror felt I then amid the vast
 And shrill machinery of the universe,
 Bleak, barren voids where Space and Time are dead,
 And the most calm necessity of things.

With all the passionate life in me I strove
 To storm the emptiness, but to what end!
 The brain of heaven is aweless and her face
 The sad, set face of the immortal Fact.

PITILESS BEAUTY

BEAUTY will not let me rest
 Either night nor day,
 Like a voice within my breast
 Calling me away.

When the morning, sad and vast,
 Rises through the stars,
 I am summoned forth again
 To the endless wars;

Evening, with her myriad eyes,
 Will not let me sleep,
 Sick for Beauty on my bed
 The long hours creep.

O Beauty, cruel and stupendous!
 Hounded, out of breath,
 I fly you through the gloom tremendous
 Down the slopes of Death.

ESTHER

You, that I gave of my youth,
With you my youth is fled,
The passionate purpose, the truth
Of the first, fair love that is dead—
The fierce, sweet fire of youth.

Where shall I find them at last!
Roam I the city in vain,
Seeking the days that are passed,
The old, lost rapture again,
The light of a day overcast.

You were all that to greet
Love found lovely and fair,
Swift and heedless and sweet,
Vagrant,—wild as the air,
Fleet as a wave that is fleet!

Tyrannous, pitiless, gay,
Not to be caught in Love's net:
Felt I my life as it lay,
Sweet, at our lips where they met
Stealthily stolen away,

Softly persuaded. O red,
Persuasive, sharp as the Spring's
Lips! That lured to be shed,
Wasted (as songs that one sings),
Love on your own loveliness!

Ever my life and again
At the soft pang of their touch
Thrilled, and ever again,
Sweet, of yourself overmuch
Filled, gave over again.

Wearied for rapture and worn,
Suited and tamed to your heart,
Faint between twilight and morn,
Love, like a bird shut apart,
Wist not where he was born.

Through the long nights of regret,
Longing and sorrow and love,
Life, that was wilful to fret,
All the old heaven above
Forgot, nor was sad to forget.

Glad is the heart ere it break
At the dear bosom, the breath
Hurried and hurt for love's sake,
Sweet the surrender, the death.
Sweet, at her breast that we take!

Love that must die to adore,
All of itself dispossessed,
At the dear bosom gives o'er;
Glad is the pain at her breast
One with the self we adore!

Still to give all to the end
To the most loved one away,
Life, love and longing to spend;
Self itself given away,
Touch, tremble, be her, and end!

Yet even I after all,
Dear, of those prisoning wiles
Wearied, of words musical,—
Sad, sweet curving of smiles,
Eyelids that flutter and fall.

Scornful and pitiless so,
Caring not, carelessly me,
Sweet, from yourself you let go
Free as a bird that is free.
Little then did I know

All the wild anguish, nor how
Haunts the last, lovely embrace,
Pangs of remembrance—I bow
Here in the shadow my face.
Never I loved you till now!

Many a love have I known,
Yet in the darkness apart
Love, at all lips not your own,
Kisses still faithful at heart
Ever the first lips alone.

Ah, the kind beauty, the first
 Lips that lured us to love!
 Breast that bowed to our thirst
 First, from the heaven above,—
 Heart Love trembled at first!

Once on a night that is gone,
 Once in a twilight adored,
 You, in your beauty alone,
 Sweet, unsheathed like a sword,
 Slenderly trembled and shone.

Once lay bared to your spell
 All of the heart of my pain,
 Bared as the earth, where it fell
 Soft, to the soft Spring rain,
 Wanton and wild and well.

Reckless with love and with laughter
 Where are you vanished away,
 Loved and forsaken, and after
 Followed by Love all the way,
 All the long journey thereafter?

Esther, where are you fled!
 With you my youth went down.
 Dear delight, are you dead,
 Slipped the Cyprian crown,
 Love, from that loveliest head?

All the wild dreams that Love wove
 Once for temple and brow
 Waned, and the halo thereof!
 Whom are you comforting now?
 Whom do you give of your love,

Spoiled and despoiling? Or who
 Now lies meshed in those smiles,
 All the sweet snaring of you
 Caught, the old lovable wiles,—
 Ways of your love that I knew?

Dear, do you give them, nor spare,
 All the old secrets to him,
 Hand-touch and waft of the hair!
 Is he or sturdy, or slim,
 Dark, or ruddy and fair?

Dark and dead lies the town. i
 Seeking I wander astray.
 Lost one, my loved one, my own
 Youth with you vanished away,
 With you my youth went down!

LIFE

"CEASE, cease,"—cries the voice of sorrow.
 But still a voice through all our pain
 Cries out at the breast of the beloved,
 "Be born again, be born again!"

Then at the hushed and the holy bosom,
Ourselves in rapture rendering up,
To the unseen lips beyond we pass it,—
The anguished and the immortal cup.

MOON-MIST

LAST evening when the dew-drenched veil
Of mist and moonlight pearly pale
All silver-soft and silent lay
Across the country far away,
Again I seemed to see you come
As one that turns at twilight home
Over the glimmering moonlit fields
And meadows that the lowland yields.

In the far hollows soft asleep
The mists like flocks of trooping sheep
Cloudily drifted here and there,
And a low murmur all the air,
Of crickets' and cicadas' sound,
Thrilled through the meadows miles around,—
A sweet susurrus half-aloud.
Nearer you drifted like a cloud.

Some benediction of the blessed,
Some hovering pity seemed to rest
On the mild country twilight-stilled.
Throughout the night your presence thrilled,—
That haunting aura drawing near;
My spirit trembled as in fear,

Or joy, through all that lovely dread
Feeling around her silence shed
Your odorous being, dark and sweet—
The lingering slowness of your feet.

Doubtful I learned in dreamy mood.
When, suddenly, before me stood
Your breathing beauty drenched with dew
Of dusk, and fragrant through and through
With breath of the wild country ways,
Cool with wet night and shimmering haze
Of gauzy twilight starry-clear.
That tangible loveliness so near,
That vehement weight and sweet excess
Of your own very loveliness,
Almost I thought to reach and touch,
Nor dared for longing overmuch.

The twilight's trembling web of light
Hung low with stars and drowsy night;
Lifting an everlasting breast
Swayed cloudlike with the wind's unrest
That lustrous presence, and the face
Was lifted upward for a space.

Luminous were the eyes and grave,
With light and shadow like a wave
Shot through, the old familiar look
That first my soul in service took,
And soft the solemn lips whose ease
Had drunken the immortal peace

Beyond all sorrow; shadow-screened
Against the garden gate it leaned
As oft of old, nor seemed to know
Whether to linger, or to go.

With one low cry of longing then
I would have caught it up again—
And all that anguish! But it laid
Across the somber lips allayed
A silent finger-tip, the eyes
Smiled on the hurt of my surprise.

The cold light of the moon, that shone
Cloud-covered, quenched, and you were gone!

In that one gesture, as by chance,
Your whole life's pathos at a glance
I read, or seemed to read—the whole
Elusive secret of your soul,
Her tender mystery and shy
Inviolable virginity.

COR CORDIUM

UNKNOWN belovèd that my youth is seeking,
Where are you hidden from me far to-night,
Amid the myriad never-ending faces,
Patient and pure—a lode-star and a light!

Sweet allegories in the world around me,
Presage and parables of you I read;
But prophecies all faces loved before you,
Heralds and hints of the dear face indeed.

O God's dear candle in the world-wide darkness
Burning to find me and to lead me home,
Dear resting-place beyond my utmost sorrow,
Whither my lonely footsteps ever roam!

Out of the troubled sea of human faces
And laboring hearts of the wild world's unrest,
When shall the doom-wave bear me up to meet you—
The most compassionate and consoling breast!

A GIRL'S EYES

ONCE in the crowded city street
Your eyes, that mine did chance to meet
One instant, for that instant took
My soul in through such depthless look
Of clarid innocence, as seemed
Beyond all height or depth undreamed,
All cloudless clearness of their own
To draw and drag her gaze far down,
Unveiled by subtle miracle—
Being's unfathomable well.

One instant only,—and the whole
And sudden wonder of a soul

Lay bared, one instant on the brink
 My spirit trembled, that did sink
 Through you a meditative space
 Into the soul of all the race.

A drop of the great Mother-sea,
 Out of your eyes looked up at me
 An atom of all life, the vast
 And ravening Ocean here upcast;
 Borne to me on the tide before
 In the great waters' rage and roar
 We hurried by forevermore.

'Twas but a wild and whirling glance,
 And yet amid the dizzy dance
 Of Fate and Horror, in that look
 A sudden recognition took
 Each of the other, as it went
 A silent salutation sent
 Across the outer banishment.

Passed me the moment, and the eyes
 Passed, on the opened paradise
 Rolled back the everlasting door
 And all the street was as before,
 A secret signed and sealed; and yet
 I saw it and shall not forget,
 Whether we ever meet, or when,
 If in ten thousand years again,
 Sweet, by that look shall know you then!

A LOVE-SONG

Love me for nothing Time may take away,
But for my very self that must endure,
Fixed as the stars along the eternal way,
Strong for your strength, and for your love's sake
pure.

Then though this glowing force and frame decline
Through gradual changes to the withered worst,
Still through the veiled defeat you shalt divine
The immortal soul that turned to you at first.

APRIL IN NEW ENGLAND

THIS tender Spring-time twilight flowerless yet,—
But hopeful; shy, upon her heart has set
A single blossom simply, as might do
Some little country maiden that a few
Flowers entwines amid her folded hair,
(For lack of greater largess) to make her fair
And lovelier for her lover's joy, and waits
Solemnly in the dusk, and hesitates
With sweet, low brows amid the shadows dim—
Her tremulous loveliness—and prays for him,
Patient, with starful eyes and lips all dumb,
For her first lover that he soon may come.

MIDNIGHT

Now soft slumber seals thine eyes,
On thy parted lips there lies
From the farthest Paradise
The high word unspoken. Now
With quiescence o'er thy brow
Slide the soothing finger-tips,
And the healing Pity dips
In the most serene repose
All thy being. Like a rose
Drooped on drowsy evenings,
'Round thy fragile presence clings
A sweet perfume, and a breath
Still on the near marge of death
Murmurs of thy life. But thou,
Sweet, where art thou fled, or how
Shall I find thee, that but now
To my longing didst lift up
The immortal pity's cup
And thy being gavest to share!
Shall I find them anywhere,
The grave eyes and pitying hair?
For the ancient terrors press
'Round me and the loneliness;
The implacable Dæmon,
Beauty, lays his hand upon
My hot pillow sleepless now,
And on the accustomed brow,
The pale cave of many songs.
All the sorrow in me longs

Sleepless for thine answering touch:
Art thou vanished then so much!
If with pleading hands I knock
The barred gates, wilt thou unlock
Those hushed gardens of thy soul,
Take me in and make me whole?
Would I, too, were folded in
That soft silence, and the din
Vanished of the outer host,
In thy being's quiet lost.
Knock I the barred gates upon
Vainly—nay, for thou art gone—
In the end we are alone.

Foolish search and folly vain;
Thou art vanished in disdain.
Spurned the faintly breathing shell
Still of thee half audible,
Spurned the prison, and the net
The sad Fates for thee have set
From thy feet without regret
Shaken; risen sole and free
In its native dignity
The inviolable self of thee,
These low haunts and hurts above!
Ah, for every soul we love
But from the eternal home
As a saviour still doth come
Sent, a summons from on High
To the ancient Verity,
The pure Beauty; for a space
Here, a little, fleet embrace,

In the night-time, the starlight,
 Couched beside us in the night,
 Sounds the soft recall, the lost
 Way back to the starry host!
 Love, that whispers the astray
 The forsaken homeward way,
 The lost secret at the heart's
 Portals murmurs,—and departs.

Now I see thee as anew
 The soft veil of slumber through,
 Purged and purified, at ease
 As one under dreamful seas
 Heaving with soft tides, and know
 Thee with sudden pity so.
 O dear, fallen angel sent
 To console my banishment!
 Hast thou wounded with me, sweet,
 In the dust those quiet feet?
 For my weakness sacrificed
 And my fault ex-paradised,
 So to tread the lower way
 Of long sin which I do stray?
 Thou predestined to the quest
 Of my furious soul's behest,
 In the dark and dizzy dance
 Fallen against her heart by chance!
 O then in remembrance
 All the bitter cost I told
 Of past evils manifold,
 In one brimming cup of pain
 To the dregs I drained it then!

The pure stars in solemn pose
Past thy framing window rose.
High Arcturus and the Seven
Throned in the cerebral heaven
Like sad thoughts upon thy sleep
Shone; but I that could not keep
All that anguish in control,
Drifting a disembodied soul,
Like a larva, on the bed
Left this spectral self and sped
Upward in a wild prayer borne
To the Pity beyond scorn.
Struggled upward, climbed and came
Past the battlements of flame,
Heaven's turrets ringed arow
And the trembling earth below,
There I left thee slumbering so.

Stainful and all unforgiven
Yet I passed the gates of heaven,
Beating upward, made my way
Past the Splendors in array;
Bowed beside the silver wave,
Lo, one sat serene and grave,
Drooping with bowed aureole.
And it was thy very soul
In her maiden paradise,
But deep peace was on the eyes.

THE GREAT KINDNESS

SORROWFUL all night and sleepless
In the silent room,
At my side I felt you breathing
Softly through the gloom,

The dim fragrance of your slumber,
Till the morning;—lo!
Two well arms and wanton caught me
Up out of my woe!

Generous and full of bounty
Of supreme relief,
The dear insolence of your beauty
Crushing out my grief!

Till through blinding tears I felt it,
Through glad tears again,
The kind touch of the great gladness
Reach through all my pain!

TO A YOUNG GIRL HEARD SINGING

I HEAR thy voice beyond the narrow wall
Cheerfully rise and fall
In unpremeditated mood and might
Of innocent delight.
O careless and inscrutable, and wise
Beyond all perplexities!
Let me bow down here at thy viewless feet
In adoration meet,

For happiness is holy, and the bliss
 That flows from hearts like this,
 And beautiful and glad it is to live.
 Pity me and forgive.
 Pity me whom the implacable Dæmon
 Has set his seal upon,
 The obsessive seal of slakeless song and whirled
 Wondering across the world.

Thy virgin aura in soft snares of sound
 Shed odorously around,
 The chaste attraction of thy life a-flower,
 Lures with insistent power.
 Fain would I dip into thy soul and drink,
 Trembling on the dim brink,
 Soft Lethe. and oblivious uncontrol
 From the untroubled chalice of thy soul.

Yet thee I may not reach to nor come near,
 To mar thee, or make less dear
 With grief of mine own self; unlovelier, touch
 Thee throned beyond so much
 So far, above this shamefuller self below
 Strugglingly doomed to go
 With the lost angels evermore, and tread
 The lower ways of dread,
 Toward the lost Paradise to rage and roam
 Whither thou art at home,
 Beat at the gates in angry grief, and long
 Backward in contrite song.

Fain would I reach to thee, fain touch and drown
 In purity of thine own,
 Full peace and struggle perfect,—not for me
 The accomplished ecstasy,
 Me longingly allotted to express,
 And forego loveliness;
 Nor may I wound thee with one woe of mine
 To make thee less divine
 Clear Ardour; holier than mine anguished bliss
 Thy natheless joyance is,
 That dwellest with white Beauty cheek to cheek,
 Whither I sigh and seek,
 That knowest it not, and liest in His hand,
 Whom I to understand
 Through many a shame and bitter thought have trod
 O thou asleep in God!
 Thy strifelessness is more than all my strife,
 Thy lethe than my life!

For as by seeking the first angels fell—
 The fault inexpiable—
 So all we move through sorrows to the end,
 That strive to comprehend;
 Seeking toward the old peace not anymore
 Are as we were before,
 Nor at grave eyes, nor on no loving breast
 Beauty allows to rest.

But thou, clear Joy, if ever looking back
 On thine accomplished track
 Thou turnest, so mayest thou glimpse what here ha
 been
 And the fierce gulf between:—

Beauty at rest arrived in faith and face,
And Beauty on her race
Still toiling upward, laboring toward thee
And what thou art, to be!

SICKNESS

ERE the first cock-crow gave the warning,
Upon my sick-bed in the morning
I thought of you that I gave my youth to,
Her whole glad heart of passionate truth to.

Alas, for a later dream I left you,
And from my heart the years had reft you!
Then first I knew it, then first I heeded
How much I had loved you, how much I needed.

Ah never before so much did I love you,
The mystery and the memory of you!
I hid my face in the silent pillow,
The years rolled over me like a billow.

O pitiless love, what have you done me,
To lay this yoke of your beauty on me!
There with bowed head I did atone you
For every wrong that I had done you.

Long had I sought to forget, but ever
Follows me everywhere forever
A little, riotous shape and slender,
My slandered Youth, serene and tender,

The small, sweet arms so kind to save me,
The look of the woman's hands that gave me
The cup of joy, a bounteous measure,
The eyes that smiled upon my pleasure.

In my dreams you are ever by me.
I wake and the lovely phantoms fly me,—
Dreams and darkness and midnight terror,—
Which is the truth and which the error?

The pale, cold clouds the moon enwreathing,—
I lie awake for the sound of your breathing,
As in the old nights without number.
I miss the fragrance of your slumber.

I miss your voice in the morning calling.
I wake, and the April rain is falling.
Ah, much unkind things have found me
Since last your arms were laid around me!

Fled are the young, glad days of riot;
The rain falls and the room is quiet.
And O I need your beauty to hush it,
Crowd out the pain in my heart and crush it,

Stealing around my sadness slowly,
To weary me out and heal me wholly!
Dusk, and the darkling rain to screen us,
What sorrow could get in between us!

In vain I wake to the old complaining,
 I hear the sound of the steady raining:
 Out of my sickness and my sadness
 I long for a touch of the old, well gladness.

O to be heart on heart together
 Here once more in the April weather;
 Beauty and weariness comprehended,
 And the pain of longing and longing ended!

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THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Out of the secrets of your eyes
 Looks up at me, most grave and wise
 And weary from long lives of strife,
 The ancient mystery of Life,
 At the old call to the old pain
 Forever rearsen again:
 Their steadfast patience still is set
 Against some goal far distant yet.

So many a love have they endured
 Long ages past in lives obscured;
 In Nineveh or Babylon
 A slave, or from some ancient throne
 Looked out like morning, in the dusk
 Of cypress dale, or groves of musk,
 Trembled through lashes wet with love
 Up to the eager eyes above.

When at your somber breast I lean,
 Her tidal ebb and flow between
 Still hear I, as within the shell
 Of the great ocean audible,
 The sad and inarticulate roar
 Of life, and ever toward the shore,
 The blood beloved with every breath
 Pour on, of void and vasty death.

Yet comes an hour when, face to face,
 Fear dies, death fades, and pulses race
 Joyous and gladly to the doom;
 When grave your eyes amid the gloom
 Burn against mine, looks up anew
 Their dreamy lids and lashes through
 And blinding tears of mine, to me
 The old, sweet lure and mystery,
 The spirit of dear Life; and clings,
 Tugs at my heart and sways and sings
 The sweet Persuasion like the Spring's,
 The insatiate Beauty, at your breast
 Clamors and urges with unrest
 And smiting shock of lovely pain,
 "Be born again, be born again!"

THE WAVE OF LIFE

As the still moon without stir
 Draws the waters after her,
 The sad robe of all the sea—
 Silently thou drawest me.

As the billows on the shore
To be broken and give o'er
Dash themselves in dying spray,
So I give myself away.

To the grave pool of thine eyes
Draw me down in dreamy wise,
Till I tremble on the brink,
Dip into thy soul, and drink

Lethe soft. Ah, dark decease!
Not the wave may be at peace
Till it shatter, nor Love rest
Save at the beloved breast.

FOR THEM ALL

At night through the city in a song
Like a cloud I drift along.

I slip into the shop-girl's room,
Soothing her eyes amid the gloom.

I smooth the wrinkles on the cheek
Of the white mother, worn and meek.

Where the laborer sits at rest
I pour sweet dreams into his breast.

The old man and the little child
Bending o'er the page have smiled.

Into the lover's heart I stream,
Like the beloved in a dream.

The poet and the lover, too,
I drench with beauty through and through.

I am Beauty's, and I move
Lonely amid those I love.

O, poet, lover, mother, child!
For love of you my heart is wild.

Out of this very page I cry
Up to your spirit: this is I!

Are we together here at last?
O catch me up before 'tis past!

O hold me close against your breast!
There alone, at last, I rest.

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IV

FIRST LOVE

*O sorrowful face over which the years are a veil!
The vanished years are a deep veil over your face,
And Love whose eyes were bright for a little space,
The vanished years are over his eyes like a veil.*

*O sorrowful face! O meek and sorrowful face!
I cannot love you as once I have loved you—but see,
Bending back with the sad lips of memory,
I kiss a little sadness away from your face!*

LOVE'S LAUGHTER

How Love's sweet laugh derides our dusty doom
 Drowning the sullen monochord of woe;
 But stop her lips' laugh with thy kisses—lo,
 —Beyond the sky, beyond the utmost main
 The hollow murmur of the pipes of pain,
 Droning the dance adown the sounding tomb!

FIRST RAPTURE

O LAY your arms about me or I die!
 The dizzy heaven of stars around us reels.
 Far-off the screech-owl gives a tremulous cry,
 And a sad perfume through the starlight steals.

A thousand, thousand kisses on your lips,
 More than the stars in all the starry Vast!
 A thousand, thousand kisses on your lips,
 Dear love, for love's sake, till they ache at last!

Ah, why is it that those we love most
 We wound the most, or are most apt to wound,
 Even as the arrow in the armèd host
 Strikes her long-lost beloved to the ground!

I love you, and I love you, and I love you!
Beneath the starry eyes bow down your head.—
The eyes of God look envious above you—
For very joy I would that I were dead!

THE FOREST OF DREAMS

WHEN I was wandering alone
In the forest of silent dreams,
I came on my love alone
Sitting beside the still streams.

I laid her heart to my heart,
Sitting beside the still streams,
And I heard the sound of her heart
In the forest of silent dreams.

LOVE'S SORROW

ALAS, your beauty is like a flower
Doomed to be squandered in an hour;
Its lover is its greatest foe,
He that wills it kills it so.

Alas, your beauty is like a dove,
The bright eyes and the delight thereof,
Prisoned behind Love's golden bars,
Grow dimmer than the morning stars.

Had I the gift, this would I give—
To love you, and yet let you live,
To have you, and yet leave you still
Inviolat and invincible!

BY THE SEA

Look, on the ocean
The waves are asleep,
With a quieter motion
The little waves weep.
Night sinks on the Deep.

What is it thou fearest,
Looking anxiously so?
What is it thou hearest?
The elves as they go
Sing sadly and low.
—O my darling, my dearest!

Between birth and sleep
This moment is ours.—
While wilt thou weep
And drop all thy flowers,—
And all thy pale flowers!

PREMONITION

Must you become whom I have loved so long
Only a vagrant song,
You—that mine arms have known so many a time!
Alas, I have striven to catch you in a word,
Your beauty in a rhyme.
Ah no—and can it be—!
Must you become, whose heart-beats I have heard,
Only a memory!

AT DUSK

Look, before us reaches the wide flat sea
Over his sands! Now in this moment I know
Something quiet and singing lost long ago,
Come back to me.

Lean to me, do not laugh, bend down from above.
O piteous head the days and the years shall bow!
And the glad love I love you with utterly now,
Ah, what of love!

Ah for a little now do not laugh, or be glad!
All the years must weary and leave us gray.
We shall forget all the glad words we say,
Grow old and sad.

O hold me, hold me—do not let me forget!
Throw your arms about me closely, lean your head—
Say the old words again, and when you have said,
Whisper them yet!

SONG

Your body was made for many things, O love,
For the feasting of eyes and the pleasure of many
hands,
And the clasping of weary arms bending above,
And the delight of lovers in starlit lands,

And the mouths of many children that shall cry aloud
As they press, and the small, soft worm's untiring
mouth,
When you are weary, when you are laid in your
shroud,
And have turned your back on love, and the sun,
and the south.

THE MOON OF SONG.

SWEET—lest I ever forget,
Look on me now with thine eyes;
When the sun of my love is set
The moon of my songs shall arise.

Love that loves thee alone,
How should he sing of thee yet!
Song that is wild with regret
Shall sing of thee when thou art gone.

Song that is wild with regret
Remembers the look of the eyes;
When the sun of my love is set
The moon of my songs shall arise.

LOVE AND DEATH

Now night is swarming about us with all her stars,
Beside the sea, we two, after the pain
To sit and dream, how sweet it is and sad
To sit and dream again!

How great a prophet and a teacher is love
That in all things images the "To be,"
I always hated death and the dark thought
Before love came to me,

And all the body temporal and faulty,
And all sad, common things that feed the tomb;
But in your arms I understand and pity
Their sorrowful high doom.

I would have cried "Let all things die, yea, all things,
I only will not, I will not, only I!"
Dear love, and do you also hasten deathward
Under the same blind sky!

Against your lips, deep from your eyes now burning
Grave against mine, I draw with dizzy breath
The holy pain of life, and all the splendid
Glad tragedy of death!

LOVE, LISTEN TO THE OLD WORDS AGAIN

Love, listen to the old words again,
Your eyelids droop so tired,—
Though Time and Fate and bitter pain
Against us have conspired,
I shall always love you as before!
Yea—what is love with the years at war!
In the evening one is tired.

Now star on star ascends the Deep,
—Your eyelids droop so tired,—
O I will cry it through your sleep
As if all heaven choired!
Her heart replies not any more.
She has heard it a thousand times before.
Sleep has closed the shadowy door.
—In the evening one is tired.

EVENING PRAYER

Now through the dusk the straining eye discerns,
Beyond the clear horizon's cloudless brim,
A single taper flaming white and slim,
Where the pure star of holy evening burns.
Big Jupiter across the silence yearns,
While slowly through the darkness deep and dim
Sirius climbs along the eastern rim,
And the great glittering wheel of heaven turns.

I pray that I like these may still be found
 Upon love's orbit, be it day or night,
 Unvariable through all the years and days;
 'Mid lives that falter and blind worlds around,
 Irrevocable, unwearable and bright,
 Wheeling along the everlasting ways.

LOVE AND THE UNIVERSE

High up in heaven a crystal music, ground
 From frost of the sweet chiming wheels that roll,
 Tunes star to star, as soul to answering soul,
 From high Arcturus to the deep Profound.
 Orion in the ocean of sweet sound
 Moves duly, every star with bright control
 Upon his axis rings the radiant pole,
 And the immortal framework wheels around.

So you and I (even as the planets draw
 And bind each other), balance love with love
 In the great universe of night and day;
 Fixed and unchangeable, with love for law,
 (And both immortal) 'round each other move,
 Eternal and invariable as they.

SONG

ON beaches and dunes
 The starlight asleep
 Lies like a veil—
 Why wilt thou weep!

Thou wert but so happy
 One moment, and yet
 Now thine eyes droop,
 Thine eyelids are wet.

I love thee, I love thee—
 Lift up thine head.
 O thou art beautiful!
 Would I were dead!

Would I might drink
 Of thy kisses and die,
 While the stars in a web
 Hang low in the sky!

Nay—thy pale tears
 Fall down, one by one.
 O my sweetheart, my darling,—
 What have I done!

The young virgin moon,
 On the waters asleep,
 Hangs like a sword—
 Why wilt thou weep!

FRAILITY .

DEAR love, how like a fading dream
 'Mid the Immensities you seem!
 In the blind universe of things
 The thought of you beats weary wings,

Made laughable by all the stars
 And Time that on your beauty wars;
 Yet in you lies my hope, my doom,
 My resurrection, and my tomb.

SEA-SPELL .

SWEET love, look up a little ere love be fled,
 Lift up thine eyes, sad love, undauntedly,
 A little while, here by the sleeping sea,
 Before the night-time and the dawn are dead.

Lift up, sad love, the wonder of thine head;
 Lo—it is lovely now and loved of me!
 I shall not always love so perfectly.
 Sweet love, look up a little ere love be fled.

I shall forget thee and the words we said,
 I shall forget thee and the love of thee—
 Ah love, ere sunrise slant upon the sea,
 Sweet love, look up a little ere love be fled!

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WOMAN

Now you have come to me,—the sea is dark and still,
 The dunes shut out the wind, here where we sit
 alone—
 Here may we watch the stars together, and take our
 fill
 Of silence and of night and the sea's ancient moan.

Lo—you have wandered down through all the old-
 world ways,
 Your arms are Cleopatra's, Helen's, Semiramis',
 Who clasped the whole wide world and healed it
 with a kiss,
 And you the mother of men through all the changing
 days.

O with a fierce child-love, as for a mother, I cry
 For the sacred source of things, whence I, too, have
 my breath,
 —To draw you down to my heart and feel your pity-
 ing sigh,
 While myriad unborn souls call from the wastes of
 death!

TO A WOMAN

PRESS your close face up to the glass,
 That is so still and pure and fine:
 See where the sea-mews pass and pass.—
 The dipping sky is red like wine.
 The sea beats the shore in a long line.

Let it lean/ upward to the night's,
 That is so full of strange, wide things,
 Of steady and of starry lights,
 Of memories and wonderings.
 —Sleep leaps the west with white wings.

It is full of dreams that fade and fall,

Love will not let it smile nor rest,

The unborn children call and call.

It is crowded with dumb dreams from the west:

Age comes soon with a great rest.

SEA-MIST

THE mist is on the sea, and over the long dunes

The long mist stretches blindly to the sea.

Here on this bleak side beyond the gray lagoons

What a childhood song creeps on the waves to me,

With a low sound, with a soft, low sound of the sea!

O when the heart sings with dumb, hovering tunes,

How may we endure the songs beyond the sea—!

All the flying light and splendor of glad Junes

Hurrying with the years where no glad years be,

With a low sound, with a soft, low sound of the sea!

I will rise and sing after the dead moons,

I will rise and sing, knowing we are more free,

More strong than Time or Fate; but here by the
lagoons

O do not sing at all, but lean, O lean to me,

With a low sound, with a soft, low sound of the sea!

SELF-SURRENDER

Now the night
 Draws along,
Shade and light
 Shift and throng;
Through the twilight steers my spirit to your spirit
 In a song.

Ah who knows
 What we are,
Sweet, who knows!
 Very far
Dwells the single soul apart from all souls,
 Like a star.

Yet again
 On her quest,
Drunk with pain,
 Toward your breast
Like a seeking angel gropes all myself
 Unexpressed.

O my dove!
 O my sweet!
O my love,
 At your feet
Here, my spirit in my song wholly bared,
 Lies complete!

VISTAS

BEYOND the dark, wide sea lie the enchanted isles,
Beyond the long horizon a music calls to me;
I see it in the sadness and smiling of your eyes,
I hear it in the far-off rustling of the sea.

O sweet lands lost at birth that we shall never find!
O glad life passing by and things that cannot be!
I see it in the sadness and smiling of your eyes,
I hear it in the far-off rustling of the sea.

• VALE

THE last, late swallow is fled
And all the hope of the heart.
The summer is over and dead.

Forever and ever to part—!
The summer is over and dead,—
But what of the hopeless heart!

Come, for the swallow is fled!
Come away silent heart,
Silent with dreams that are dead.

Come—for you cannot stay
Nursing your restless heart
All in the dusk of the day.

Come—for when all has been said
 What is there more to say!
 The summer is over and dead.

The last, late swallow is fled
 Silent into the south—
 But O the curve of her throat!

O the sound of her voice,
 The kisses of her mouth!
 —The summer is over and dead.—

CRESCENDO

AND now the time is come and I must go.—
 Turn from me, turn your head, and turn away,
 So that your eyes have not that quiet look,—so
 Leastwise I may go dreaming the long way.
 Loosen your arms, give my heart room to pray!

Ah that it should be, that the things we feel
 Fade, and we cannot fix in one sharp cry
 Their stillness! Over the long sea-dunes steal
 The sea-mists, and beyond their whiteness lie
 Death, and old age, and loveless things that die.

Turn back once more—O take me with all your strength!

Wound me with love, slay me until life dies!
That I may never see again, that I may never come
at length

To the loveless faces, the empty, weary eyes!

O cover me with your love that I may never rise!

SERENADE

THE stars are out, and the heavens are silent and very deep!

My heart was wakeful and wild, and hungry to be
with the stars,

I rose and came to thy window, but thou, my beloved,
sleep.

Sleep, though my heart be wild and wakeful and full
of unrest;

The crickets are still, and the breezes creep in at
thy window, sweet:

Thy right arm is under thy head, and thy left lies
over thy breast.

Sleep till the wind be dead and the stars swoon out
of the skies,

The world is full of laughter and weeping and pas-
sionate prayer;

More soft than the night on the waters are thine eye-
lids over thine eyes.

I lay in my chamber dreaming, but my heart would
leave me no rest;

I thought, when the morrow dawns I shall never
see her again—

And my heart grew loud in my veins, my heart grew
mad in my breast.

I said: "I will rise and go and sing to her in the night;
She will wake from her sleep and come, and come
to me where I sing,

And come to my arms where I stand, alone, in the
pale starlight."

But sleep, it is better, beloved, than vexing thee with
my cries;

The world is full of laughter, and weeping, and
passionate prayer;

More soft than the night on the waters are thine eye-
lids over thine eyes.

Old dreams, old loves, old desires, and all the old
wonderings

Of the piteous bygone loves wail 'round at thy
window, sweet;

But thou art weary, beloved, yea, weary of all these
things,

Weary of all these things and sick of the earthly bars
That sever spirit from spirit—the little things of
the world.

O thou borne into my soul from beyond the light of
the stars!

The old loves will not be hushed, they wail and weep
without rest.—

The crickets are still, and the breezes creep in at
thy window, sweet;

Thy right arm is under thy head and thy left lies
over thy breast.

Sleep till the wind be dead and the stars swoon out
of the skies:

The world is full of laughter, and weeping, and
passionate prayer,

More soft than the night on the waters are thine eye-
lids over thine eyes.

DEPARTURE AT DAWN

Now all the east is tired of the twilight,
And the world's borders blossom like a rose,
And the world's tapers tremble and grow dim;
Under the cloud-line, under the gray twilight,
Under the pale, cold arch of heaven's rim
The low white fire of the morning glows,

And a clear wind is wandering in the meadows—.

O queenly heart, never again, again

Shall this thing be, or this sweet wonder be!
I take my way through the unending meadows,
Through the long fields beside the sunless sea
I take my way, I pass from your domain.

The awful Fire whiter than the morning,
 The holier flame followed through day and day
 Burns to a purer light the old blind love;
 Under the infinite arches of the morning
 I move with a new gladness; high above
 The first stars fade, and I am far away.

I have found one thing more high than the old heaven,
 More sweet than all sad things save only one,
 —Yes,—and more sweet than your two folded
 hands.

Sleep and forget; the opening gates of heaven
 Flood with a sudden pain the empty lands
 And the old wonder wakes; but I am gone.

A CRY

SHE is gone forever and ever
 And the loathèd, unloving faces
 Press 'round me and leave me never.

I am set in the lonely places.
 O passionate heart forever
 The loathèd, unloving faces!

I wish they would leave me alone
 To think of her in my heart,
 Unseen, unnoticed, unknown.

O loathèd, unloving faces
 Leave me to sit apart,
 Apart in the lonely places!

I said: "I will build in my heart
A paradise out of the world,
And live in my world apart."

I said: "I shall see her never
In the body, well even so,
I will live in the spirit forever."

God said to me, "This cannot be.
You are little more than the brute.
Shall body and spirit agree!"

I wish that my love would come
And lay her lips to my lips
And kiss me till I were dumb!

I wish she would bend her head
And red lips over my throat,
And rise up, and leave me dead!

~ SUMMER NIGHT

THE starlight crept in at my window through the
apple-tree branches above,
The wind moaned over the meadows and swayed my
curtains around,
And my heart grew hungry again for the face of the
old, lost love,
I could not sleep for the pain of starlight and wan-
dering sound.

The cry of the crickets grew faint and waned on the shimmering air.

I saw the long dim meadows sloping down to the sea.

I could not sleep for the silence and the utter, blind despair,

I could not rest for desire of the old love to comfort me.

I rose and held out my arms alone in the pale, cold light,

I prayed for the old, lost love; but beyond my window-bars

I saw his proud, white form, as of one in the restless night.

Moving far-off, disconsolate, under the lonely stars.

NIGHT AND MEMORY .

ALL day I banish thee from out my heart,
 All day amid the unsuspecting throng
 I drown thy face with laughter and with song
 And daylight cleaves us like a sword apart.

But night with her great silence sets me free;
 Then am I thine again at last, at last—!
 Night comes to me out of the hollow Vast
 With myriad stars and memories of thee.

TO THE EVENING STAR

O STAR, like my own belovèd's eyes brimming with
tears,

Deep in the forehead of the western eternity!

Have you a deep compassion on me, even as she
Whose beauty like yours shines steadfast over the
years!

In the pale morning her pity of me falls like the dew,
In the splendor of noon her love enfolds me about;
Beyond the loud rabble and the innumerable rout,
Her memories of me in the evening arise with you.

If I fly beyond the morning's bared and immaculate
breast

Shall I find her at last, or over the westering wave?

Her brows are broad and her eyes are steady and
grave,

O holy star, like yours in the heaven of the west!

AN EMPTY HOUSE

Cry not aloud against your lot—

Bow not your head upon your knee.

Strive not with the strength that availeth not

By the long beach with the things that be,

"It is vain," saith the sea.

This is her room, this is where she slept
In the old years, here where the waves broke
On the gray shore, and the little waves crept
Whispering of the middle sea as they spoke;
This is where she woke.

She is gone, she is gone,—and the waves fall
In the old familiar way, the cricket's shrill
Drops, and the sea makes no sound at all;
Save for the cicadas on the hill,
It is still, it is still.

She is gone, she is gone, and there is no cause
For any weeping or sorrow, there is no need
For any silence; though the old dreams pause,
New dreams arise as the new years speed,
As the years recede.

Only high up among the stars
Out of the long ages roll
Echoes of one striving against the bars
Of Time toward some white goal.
It is the "I," it is the soul.

Never though the new years bring new joys to keep
Shall it turn to one as in the old delight.
Never in all the years again shall you sleep,
Here by the sea, by the starlight,
In the night, in the night.

THE THOUGHT OF HER

My heart is like a troubled sea
Where for a moment rest
My thoughts, like sea-birds wearily
On a white breast.

They rise again and they are fled,
Passed as the winds that pass,
But one sits with a wearier head,
Longer alas!

A long, long time he sits and dreams—
It is the thought of you—
Then, rising on the unbounded streams,
Vanishes, too.

. NEW LONGING

ALL the night in my heart
The dreams of you flow deep and still as the night.
When the gray morning dawns
I am as sad as the morning, as faint as the light.

All the long, long day
I think but of you beyond the horizon's bars.
When the first twilight comes
The thoughts of you in my heart awake with the stars.

O my love, my love,
 That the world were rolled away between us two!
 'Mid all the stars and the worlds
 I thirst for you alone and for only you.

Would I might lose myself
 In you, become part of you in the blood and the
 breath,
 Breathe you and die of you
 Once, and be one with your beauty forever in death!

A LAST LETTER

FORGIVE me, dear, this last and vain delay,
 This desperate utterance and foolish boast
 Of all my love of you, the thought that most
 Now in this urgent hour I long to say;
 Before in the full dawning of the day
 Love's twilight wane, and with the irradiate host
 Of stars and dreams retiring, like a ghost
 Down the long aisles of Time I fade away.

Treasure my love and keep it ever new
 I charge you, dear, as an anointing kiss
 Upon your spirit through the days to be;
 Nor grudge me this last aching cry to you,
 Wrung from a soul departing. After this
 Is the long silence of eternity.

LAST WORDS

THINK of the love eternal as the stars,
Dear heart, when the pale twilight of the day
Falls like a veil between us far away,
And evening broods above her dusky bars.

When in high heaven the lonely planets burn,
And on your quiet room you close the door—
Think of the love that lives forevermore,
Though far from you and hopeless to return.

And though the thought of joy that others had,
And our eternal sorrow drown your smile,
Think on this wonder for a little while
I pray you, dear, and be not very sad.

ACROSS THE WORLD

SAD love adieu! -
So far away you are,
Not evening nor the wings of the morning furled
About the breast of the world
Shadow and light at the same time us two.
Farther than the farthest star
Hung on the bosom of morning, still more far
Than the sea's sound you dwell;
If in ten thousand years we should meet again
By those eyes I should know you then.
Dear love, farewell!

SONG RETURNS

OFTEN I fly thee, wandering far apart,
But I come back to thee,
As weary streams that from the mountains start,
To the eternal sea.

Often I fly thee, knowing what thou art,
But I come back to thee—
And Song with tired wings and tired heart
To the great memory.

PHANTOMS

BETWEEN the stars and the grass
What shape is seen to pass
Over the starlit and over the white lands!
O it is my love, my love, with the small feet and
the white hands!

Her trailing garments sweep
The grass like a still sleep,
Endlessly after her rise, and row on row
Bow the white phantoms, memories of long ago.

The sea-waves stir and stir.—
Shall I go up to her
As in the old days? O but it were sweet
To pace again to the tune of her small, sweet feet!

ILLUSION

WHEN Spring was come over the lonely hills
I thought of one who was not come with the Spring;
I said I will rise and seek her, following
Where the heart wills.

Surely I know love is a joyous thing,
Therefore will she not come to me when she wills,
Dancing along the meadows, skipping upon the hills,
And laugh and sing!

There is nothing lying beyond the hills,
No sweet, lost land or love, or anything—
Only the wind cries and the flowers spring
Along the rills.

Give me back the things that the heart wills!
Give me back the land where the stars sing!
I wander over the meadows murmuring,
Crying beyond the hills.

FAREWELL

Farewell—and now
Upon your forehead silently I press,
As from a father, with grave tenderness,
A somber kiss, and on your brow.

And this that lies

 Upon your eyelids coldly is the kiss
 Of the new friend—and this
A lover gives you even as he dies.

SONG

I SHALL not love you again
 As in the days before,
April and April's pain
 Return—ah nevermore!

Your voice when you used to call,
 The little ways you had—
I have forgotten them all,
 And yet I am not sad.

No little thought of you
 Between my breath and breath
Rises, as memories do
 To veil the face of death.

I prayed not forget
 Once, in a vain despair;
I cannot even regret
 Now, that I cannot care.

Here in the waning light
 I am not even sad;
My heart sings through the night,
 Half-sorrowful. half-glad

"I shall not love you again
 As in the days before,
 April and April's pain
 Return—ah nevermore!"

EPILOGUE

I HAVE sung many songs for you sadly, what shall I
 sing

O irrevocable love, now the veiled evening falls
 Over my youth, and the vast and the mournful walls
 Of my earlier dreams crumble down slowly withering!
 Night treads the heels of day, Spring follows Spring,
 The dark horror and the hollows of the starry halls,
 The cruel vastness of the universe enrages me and
 appalls,

Wherein your dear memory falters on unavailing wing.

O unnamed beloved, how have I done you this wrong!
 Not age, nor the dusty doom, nor generations that
 are strong

Can crush the love, deep within me, that labors
 here for breath;

Higher than the orbs and the stars and the whirling
 wheels,

The worlds of inexorable matter, my spirit reels
 Drunk with a defiance stronger than the tyranny
 of death!

NARRATIVE AND DRAMATIC
POEMS

*For all sad things and all glad things that are
My grateful spirit singing makes reply,
For love, for roses, for the evening-star,
For sorrow and for hope, before I die.*

*The vast race-memory of the ages gone
Broods through me wildly with a vague regret,
Helen, and Iscult, Troy, and Babylon—
Those ancient sorrows I remember yet.*

*Into the somber caverns of my sleep
The challenge of all Being rolls along,
And my soul echoes backward from the Deep
A ringing rapture and defiant song!*

CORPUS EST DE DEO

Lo—say the wise, say the very wise—
“Only the soul is of God” say they,
“She shall not perish or pass away—
But the flesh dies, but the fair flesh dies.”
Corpus est de Deo.

This is the time, this is the sweet time,
How that Lord Christ was risen from death,
All we shall sing, all we that have breath,
In a glad rhyme, in a low glad rhyme;
Corpus est de Deo.

One Joseph said, and good Joseph said,
“That I might bear the body away
And the white body in sepulchre lay,
And the heavy head, the heavy head!”
Corpus est de Deo.

And to His place, to His secret place
Lo—one was carried sick with sleep,
With huddling steps when the night was deep,
With slow pace, and with slow pace.
Corpus est de Deo.

With myrrh and spice, with fresh myrrh and spice,
And linen white, the white body they bound;
This saw from a more removed ground
Mary’s eyes and the Magdalene’s eyes.
Corpus est de Deo.

With spices sweet, with fresh spices sweet,
 In tomb they laid the body away,
 "O piteous Lord, Master!"—cried they,
 And "the wounded feet, O the wounded feet!"
Corpus est de Deo.

With their own hands, with their own sad hands
 They closed the door with a massy stone,
 There none remained but the watch alone,
 —On His wrist, bands, on His feet, grave-bands,—
Corpus est de Deo.

Still was around, deep still was around,
 There was none wept with a covered face,
 There was none mourning about the place
 With a low sound, with a sad, low sound.
Corpus est de Deo.

Master arise, good Master arise!
 Nay, for a little a sleep is sweet.
 Desire there was not in His feet,
 And in His eyes no light for His eyes.
Corpus est de Deo.

With sound of might, with sound of great might,
 The white grave-clothes were rent in sunder,
 With a terribleness and wonder,
 And a great light and fire of light!
Corpus est de Deo.

Be you all glad, be you now all glad,
 Be glad in your soul for your great gladness!
 His spirit sprang from the night and sadness,
 And was not sad,—lo—and was not sad!

Corpus est de Deo.

Put by vain shame, put by your vain shame,
 Loosen your hair, and your lips with song!
 Out of the darkness that is most strong
 His body came, His fair body came.

Corpus est de Deo.

Lo—say the wise, say the very wise,
 “Soul is of God, the body a vain thing.”
 Dance with your feet, let your mouth sing!
 Lift up your eyes, lift up your sad eyes!

Corpus est de Deo.

In every place say they, in each place,
 “Soul is of God, the body of shame”—
 Out of the dust His sweet body came
 And blood to His face, to His sweet face.

Corpus est de Deo.

O wondrous thing! O most blessed thing!
 Body and soul of one great birth—
 All ye that are of dust and earth
 Lift up and sing, lift ye up and sing,

“Corpus est de Deo!”

THE DESCENT OF QUEEN ISTAR INTO HADES

(Istar, slighted in her love for Idzubar and mad with jealousy, seeks revenge in the abode of Allat, the realm of the god Irkhalla, the lands of Death.)

To the mute, to the inexorable land
Istar, daughter of Sin, inclined her head,
Also her steps toward the silence directed she;
To the mute, to the arid land,
To the region where there is no sea,
Toward the country where the stars are dead
She stretched forth her hand.

Ere it was finished and done,
—The word of Queen Istar and even her fierce
word,
“The houses of darkness stand open, I haste, I
fly;
With a triumph to the dust I am gone,
Yea, even with a laughter, with a cry!
I spread my hands as a bird.
I hasten, I run,

"Toward the darkness, toward the dread death,
Toward the place whose silence is laid as a covering
thick,
Toward the land where the sun and the moon
shed no beam,
Where sleep has no murmuring breath;
For lo I am sick of a dream,
I loathe it—O I am sick!
I hunger for death!

"I burn, I am maddened, I go,
Neither any more do I cry, my wailing is dumb.
Let the winds of the dawn sing together that I
may dance!
That I may enter and go
Let the gates of the darkness advance.
Let the gates make open, I come.
I order it so.

"Make open your bolts, unbar!
Mine eyes are turned toward the place where there
is no sky,
My feet are set toward the land where the sun
is dead,
Nor starlight, nor moonlight are!
Make open, for I have said.
Unveil, for lo it is I,"
Saith the Queen Istar!

.

To the first gate when she was come,
The keeper struck off her crown, the sign of her
head,
Also her high tiara he struck with his hand,
"Enter, O lady, and come,
Of Allat it is the command,—
To the place where the stars are dead
Enter and come!"

At the second gate, at that gate
To the vaults of darkness, the palace of rain and
rust,
The rings from her ears, her ear-rings, he made
them free.
"Enter, O lady, the gate,
Of Allat it is the decree,
The gate that is scattered with dust—
Lo—this is the gate!"

At the third gate, and at the third,
The necklace bound on her neck, the circlet about,
It broke at his hand, also it fell at his touch.
"Obey, O lady, the word,
The order of Allat is such,
In the city that hears no shout,
Where no laughter is heard!"

To the fourth gate when she had pressed,
The cincture of her breast, her breast-plate laid on
her breast,
The ornaments thereof, the jewels, at his touch
they fell.

"Make bare, O lady, thy breast—
Of Allat it is the will,
In the land where the winds have rest,
Where the waves have rest!"

At the fifth gate, at the gate of rust,
The girdle of her waist, the gems of it, row on row,
In his hands he took them, he laid them across
his knees.

"Enter the palace of dust—
The word of Allat decrees,
Go, for thou willest, go—
Nay, for thou must!"

To the sixth gate when she was led,
Her armlets, her anklets, he struck from her body
sweet,
"To the land whose chiefs are as birds, whose
kings are as birds,
Enter O lady!" he said,
"They are written of Allat the words,
'Let the night be a snare for her feet,
A shroud for her head!'"

At the seventh gate, when she was there,
The keeper tore from her body the covering veil;
As a blast of trumpets, sudden as a cymbal's
clash,
Her body, splendid and bare,
Dawned on the dark as a flash,
Her body stately and pale
Dawned suddenly there!

"Enter, O lady, at length

The land of ruin, the country of trampled wheat!"

—With a shifting sound of her sandals she beat
the ground,

She burst the portal at length,

She moved with a dancing sound,

With a shifting sound of her feet

And a sound of strength.

Istar lifted her hands,

She bit them, she beat her breast, she cried with a
cry,

"O desolate lands whereof Istar hath entered the
gate,

O dark and desolate lands!

Her body is choked with her hate,

With her hands she smites you, and I

With the hate of my hands!

"O desolate, dark and dark,

For the sake of love, and a vain love, for his sake

Do I seek you, the hunger of love makes hurried
my breath!

My body, starving and stark,

Yearns toward the fullness of death,

For his sake also I make

My robes of the dark.

"Behold you—and lo—and lo!

Have I mourned at all, have I made any wail as
I went!

As a trodden serpent, a back-blown waste of the
chaff

I turn to re-plague you so.

I dance to the horror, I laugh—

My neck with a laughter is bent.

I go, I go!"

To the mute, to the inexorable place,

Istar, daughter of Sin, inclined her head,

She wearied of a bitter love, she passed, she was
gone.

In the sad, in the empty place,

With the darkness that is blind to the sun,

In the country where the stars are dead

She covered her face.

TWILIGHT AND DAWN

(TWILIGHT:)

You have had your will,

Now let me rest

Upon your breast.

O sweet, be still.

(DAWN:)

Below and above you

I kiss you and kill you,

I thrill you and fill you!

I love you, I love you!

(TWILIGHT:)

Ah give peace,
Leave me at length—
Cease from your strength,
Sweetheart,—cease.

(DAWN:)

Yours, and not mine
Is the fault:—it denies me
Your beauty, defies me
And wakes me like wine!

(TWILIGHT:)

I am yours,
Yet give me rest,—
Joyous your breast,
Mine endures.

(DAWN:)

Nay,—but once more
I will have you a space
To drown and embrace,
Clasp and adore!

(TWILIGHT:)

Alas your might
Breaks me again,—
O the pain!
O the delight!

(DAWN:)

I have rushed, I have run to you
 Sweet, overthrown.
 O my darling, my own,
 What have I done to you!

(TWILIGHT:)

Kiss me, close
 Mine eyelids fast.
 —Kill me at last.

.

THE LAST DAYS OF KING DAVID

"Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat.

Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin; and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.

So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coast of Israel, and found Abishag, a Shunamite, and brought her to the king.

And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king and ministered unto him: but the king knew her not. . . .

So David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David."

1 Kings 1, v. 1-5.

1 Kings 2, v. 10.

WITHIN the chamber of state
 Fronting the sunset from the city-gate,
 By the broidered canopy
 Of the king's carven bed, propped wearily

In his chair, on cushions blent
 Of gorgeous colors, wrought in the Orient
 By delicate hands and deft,
 Sat David; the clear furrows care had cleft
 Along his forehead, and pain,
 And the plastic stress of gigantic joy,—each vein,
 Each several little line
 Of his face the slanting light cut clear and fine
 Like a chisel, to stand out
 Against the background of twilight,—all about
 His lips and shaggy brows
 Writ deep, like words of glory. So in his house
 Sat David, and toward his lands
 Looked westward,—the thin majesty of his hands
 On the arm-props of the chair
 Reclined, hung lax. Now from the chamber there,
 Where the king's men counselling mused,
 Low murmur came of voices and sounds confused,
 And questioning: for the king
 Long days was failing, and within him the spring
 Of life almost run dry,
 So that he got no heat, and was like to die,
 And they feared. But in the room
 Sat David. Deeper around him closed the gloom
 And the outer darkness, save
 On his face light shone like hope. At each side a
 slave
 His bosom and hands in vain
 Chafed, to restore him heat; while in disdain,
 Austere from his eyes
 The relinquishing life looked forth. The vast
 emprize

Of his kingdoms he saw, that spread
Around him beyond all eye-shot, from where the red
Last fire of sunset ran,
Even eastward whence over the wide waste Syrian
From Babylonia flowed
The waters of morning, when from her portals strode
The young sun upward, even
Northward past Syria's big and starry heaven.
To his borders on the south
And the Paranian desert dumb with drouth,
Prankt upon Araby
Balmy with odors,—his cities beside the sea,
Tyre, and Sidon, and all,—
Jerusalem and Damascus held in thrall
By lordship of his will,
Stately with towers,—meadow, valley and hill,—
Blown around foaming capes
Galleys bearing him peacocks, gold and apes,—
The lands with all their flowers,
Men, birds and beasts he saw, kingdoms and powers
Teeming with fruitfulness,
Bowed down to the earth with the bounty of excess,—
Flocks on a million plains
Fed fatly, and water like blood within the veins
Of the land, to quicken her meads,
And generation that generation succeeds
As morning, morning,—the joy
Of God in the hearts of men, none may destroy—
His gift,—and in all places,
Scattered abroad like flowers, the populous faces
That at his coming had bowed
Their faces together as flowers in a crowd

At the wind's footfall,—lo
 His, David's spirit, his deeds here, to and fro,
 All up and down the land
 Sown, and his songs, as by a liberal hand,
 From zone to ringing zone
 Of the people's heart imperishably sown
 For seeds forever! Then
 On him so musing broke the voice of men
 From the outer room; for now
 The previous plan devised by the courtiers, how
 That a maiden featly formed,
 (To lie at the king's heart till it be warmed
 Perchance, in the old way),
 From the kingdoms should be chosen, on that day
 Fulfillment found, but some
 Held it a foolish thing to let her come
 Now to disturb his rest,—
 Yet fair she was, comely, with a clear breast,
 From her forehead to her feet
 Filled full of youth and bounty, and most complete—
 That hope there was in the thing:
 So wrangled the courtiers. But in the gloom the
 king,
 Statuelike, marble, vast,
 Faced toward the twilight; before his soul there passed
 The procession of his days
 And all the glory of life in her myriad ways
 Of living,—love, battle, and song,
 Kingship, and commune with God, when first from
 the throng
 His locks with the sacred oil
 From all men else were anointed, till drunk toward the
 spoil,

With lissome body and young,
 About his loins the shepherd's loose girdle-cloth slung,
 With swift bent beauty he hurled
 The shivering stone, and the head of Goliath was
 whirled
 Dustward along his feet,—
 And in Saul's tent, when with liquid glissandos and
 sweet
 Soft bubblings of sound, to his harp
 The boy's head leaned and his hands with ecstasies
 sharp
 Of quickening beauty had lured
 The sick soul backward to Beauty, the sorrow endured
 When, thankless, Saul on him turned,
 —That day in the cave,—O how the soul in him
 burned
 With the old love Saulward! When Saul
 Seeking his life with the sword, soul, body and all
 Into his hands had been sent,—
 But hurt him he could not, nay, with a cry that rent
 His lips longing to tell,
 He fell at his feet, at his feet he bowed, where he fell
 He bowed at his feet, and crept
 Saulward, and Saul lifted his voice up and wept,
 Knowing at last,—till the day
 When over Israel's people he came into sway,
 With sound of a myriad lips
 Crying, "David, David!"—The scrape of the spear
 that slips
 Through the plate, as the body careens
 Backward, the wail sent up from the Philistines
 He heard, and in the end
 The sound of his own psalms sent up to blend

With offerings from the sod,
And from a thousand tongues his joy, to God
Go up like fire! Then
From the ante-room a murmuring again
Reached him, for now was brought
The damsel into the castle, and they thought
To bring her to the king's room.
But in his chamber silent, in the gloom
Sat David, as in a dream
Before his soul he felt it glitter and gleam,
Like water the morning skims,
Bathsheba's body washing her clear limbs
When first from the starlit roof
He saw her,—the sin, the ecstasy, the reproof
Of the little first-born slain
At the hand of God, and later the thrilling pain
Of Absalom hung by the hair,
Beautiful, proud, and dead; all the despair
Not to be stilled—ah, never!
Yet back to the thought of God turning forever
His spirit closed, the peace
And the covenant remembering: great release
Fell on him, memories rife
With blessing shot new splendors into life,
That, hastening to the dead,
Through love and deeds, in life at least, he had shed
His spirit as one that bleeds
Into new veins, through Song as well as deeds
Having shed his life to the full;
Till all seemed beneficent and beautiful,—
Yea pain even as pleasure,—
Life, good in all, to the last sumptuous measure

Drained, from the smallest things,
 The taste of the golden date, the wine that sings
 Joy's paeon through the blood,
 The clash of spears, the battle's raging flood,
 And the arms of virgins white
 About the heart, up to the vast delight,
 The exuberance and excess
 Of Song and prayer closing with holiness
 Into God above it all—
 Life—Life!—Till again at the sovereign call
 Of the ancient, magic word
 Fiercely he turned, huge longing within him stirred
 Not so to be bereft
 Of the clear vigor, nor ever so to be left
 Banished. But through the calm
 Of the evening within the city arose a psalm,
 His own, on many a voice
 Lifted, and sound of instruments that rejoice
 Flooding upon him swept.
 So David sat, and all unseen to him, crept
 The spirit of Life to his side
 Returning,—the little damsel,—and bowing cried
 On the name of the king, and bowed
 At the feet of the king, calling his name aloud.

And David bade her arise.
 And fair she was and comely to his eyes,
 Flowerlike, brave and young,—
 And shy she stood in the gloom with a bashful tongue,
 From the country far-away
 Chosen and brought for a sacrifice to this day,—

That pity filled his heart.
And he took her to him: her garments she did apart
And sweet, with compassion pressed
Against the cold, sad weariness of his breast
The bounty of her own,
Generously unloosed the virgin zone,—
Yea, pityingly did press
The quickening vigor of her loveliness
Against him, and laid bare
Each little grace to lure him, for she was fair.
But David knew her not.
And still more kindly with eager body, and hot
With pity of love, she strove
To draw him, banished, into the arms of Love
And the old Beauty, drew
His heart against her to quicken it through and
through
With life, above, beneath,
Warmed with her own, and hid the face of Death
With her sweet face awhile,
To force him to love. But nothing could beguile
Backward the ebbing strength.
So all night long she cherished him. Then at length
Toward morning the creeping fear
And chill smote David. The ardent arms and dear
Unloosing, thus he said,
“Thy way lies lifeward, but mine unto the dead,
And the will of God above,
For the last time having taken leave of love
And the old way: do thou
Return then, dear, to life and leave me now.”
And he kissed her. And he felt
Slip from his neck and from his body melt,

As the Spring-time from the year,
 With piercing regret, irrevocable and sheer,
 For the last time at length
 Slip the dear spirit of Life, the bounteous strength,
 The love, the beauty and all,
 The warmth and the kindness, fading beyond recall;
 As the summer from the lands,
 Slip lingeringly the breast, the lips, the hands,
 And forsake him in the gloom
 Forever. So as a virgin she left the room,
 Slowly returning. There woke
 A babble of tongues from the inner court. Then
 broke
 The heart of the twilight in twain
 On the bosom of morning! Eastward day rose again.

SEA-VISIONS

IN his strength, and in his sad strength
 Out of his wide womb, loud and free,
 Ocean strains the shore-girth's length:
 Over the long, vast wallowing of the sea
 With a slow sound hurry his waves, with a strong
 sound to me.
 O *thalassa, thalassa!*

Not with a shout, not with a short shout,

Born of fierce life for a space,

Cries the sea, but turned about

As when the sweeping Spirit bowed on his face,

The warped waves lean in a choked race, in a
curved race.

O thalassa, thalassa!

And his thud, and his dull thud

Beats on the dun sand, beaten floor

With the full force of his flood,

With a rustling, shuffling wash on the waste shore,

In a sad tone, in a wide tone forevermore.

O thalassa, thalassa!

Where the dunes, and where the bleak dunes

Lean to the sky alone the west,

Who come past the dull lagoons,

Where the quick heat shakes on the dunes and has
no rest,

In their loose robes, in their black robes thinly
dressed!

O thalassa, thalassa!

With slow tread, and with slow tread

To the vague sound of the sea,

To the deep tomb of the dead—

O where the last, weak waves beat at you wearily,
With no sound, and with no sound whom bear you
to me!

O thalassa, thalassa!

Roses bright, red roses bright
Over the black bier richly strown,
Over the still face dead and white,
Carried in measure to the deep sea's measured moan
By a gray-head and a young son of his own!
O thalassa, thalassa!

What dumb sound, what dumb sound
Struggles back by the wind-wet shore!
Faint, sick perfume and myrrh surround
The heavy body borne to the flat sea's roar,
By the might of the sea in a great sleep evermore.
O thalassa, thalassa!

O the sweep, and calm, large sweep
Of waxen brows, O the sick grave-bands!
The hunger of white breathless sleep
Laid on the thirsty mouth, O the carven hands!
All swaying with their short, huddling steps over
the hot sands!
O thalassa, thalassa!

In the gleam, and in the bright gleam
Flashed from the spray of the ocean flying,
That face went by me like a dream;
The dear, green fields of wave lapsing and dying
Loomed dark behind, with waves singing and sigh-
ing.
O thalassa, thalassa!

.

With the beat, and with the strong beat

Of their steps the shingle rang,

With the fall of hurried feet

That all the wet beach boomed with a shuddering
pang.

And as they went the gray-head wept, but his young
son sang.

O thalassa, thalassa!

As they passed, and as they passed

Up the long, dun sea-dune way,

Beyond the bend where the sea moves vast,

The huge, flat, wheedling sea, fawning to play,

I heard his singing fade with the sea-wind away,
away.

O thalassa, thalassa!

And at his song a madness fell

On me, the whole sea's force

Entered my blood with sob and swell,

And the splendor of life and death on their mystic
course,

And a full voice spoke out of the tones of the full
sea's force.

O thalassa, thalassa!

"This dumb flesh and this still face,
 This was the body of Christ they bore;
 They have torn Him down from the sacred place,
 And the writhing God they have torn from the temple door.
 The body of a man we bear Him by the sound of
 the flat sea's roar!"
O thalassa, thalassa!

And as I stood, and where I stood,
 Along the sky-mark tense and fine
 The full sea shuddered in her flood
 And flashed to the shore in a shower of singing
 brine,
 And the stark waters lifted and sank in a long line.
O thalassa, thalassa!

And the sea's self, and the sea's whole
 And the whole arching of the sky
 Seemed part of me in the body and soul,
 And the irrevocable murmur of the Deep, and I
 shouted on high,
 And lifted my hands and shouted, "It is I, it is I!"
O thalassa, thalassa!

Lift your head, and cease your moan,
 Leave the pure flesh to flower and weed!
 Though Christ be dead and the old Christ gone,
 Our bodies shall bear a new Christ to the new
 world's need,
 With new strong words and new sad wounds that
 bleed.
O thalassa, thalassa!

Laugh—look up, not a God, but a man

Now, and part of the dust and the doom:

What is there base since the world began!

Out of the dust comes Christ and the soul from the
womb,

And the dust is splendid, and earth, and death, and
the tomb!

O thalassa, thalassa!

O from the sod, and glad from the sod

Let us reach up from the fears that be,

With body and spirit, a god to God,

Knowing that all things, body and spirit, are holy
and free,

And Christ in the dust and the grass, and the waves
of the sea!

O thalassa, thalassa!

THE MOTHER

THERE was a trampling of horses from Calvary

Where the armed Romans rode from the mountain-
side;

Yet riding they dreamed of the soul that could rise
free

Out of the bruised breast and the arms nailed wide.

There was a trampling of horses from Calvary,

And the long spears glittered into the night;

Yet riding they dreamed of the will that dared to be,

When the head fell and the heavens were rent with
light.

The eyes that closed over sleep like folded wings
And the sad mouth that kissed death with the cry
"Father, forgive them—," silently these things
They remembered, riding down from Calvary.

And Joseph, when the sick body was lowered slowly,
Folded it in a white cloth without seam,
The indomitable brow, inflexible and holy,
And the sad breast that held the immortal dream,

And the feet that could not walk, and the pierced
hand,
And the arms that held the whole world in their
embrace;
But Mary, beside the cross-tree, could not understand,
Looking upon the tired, human face.

VI

LOVE SONGS

*At the sharp, sweet pang of your lips,
At the touching of Beauty's knife,
My song from my body slips,
Like a soul released from life.*

VICTORY

Love, even as he conquers us,
Through lashes that tremble for starry tears,—
And the dear beauty over us
Laughs, as the lovely moment nears.

For all of ourselves that we give away
In the reckless rapture of sweet unrest,
For every flower of life we shed
As a sacrifice at the immortal breast,

For every joy he deflowers us of
In the ecstasy and most bitter bliss,
And every cry that is wrung from us,
Confessing us still more wholly his;

O wholly his, and more and more,
His in the end, and his alone—
O and to feel the whole, sweet soul
Bared to his beauty and overthrown!

The pitiless and the insatiate lips,
And the kind heart that bends from above,
And the glad eyes through brimming tears
Laugh, for exultant love.

FLOWERING

THE dear and beloved beauty,
 Persuasive as the Spring's,
 Lures life from the lips of Life,
 Song from the heart that sings,

To be wasted across her being:
 From the deep heart she steals
 Life to the source of Life—
 Song at her bosom reels.

As roses in a garden
 Lured by the laughing South,
 Life, long numb at the heart,
 And Song, long dumb at the mouth,

Burst, and break into blossom,
 And quicken with sweet unrest,
 Are born and shed and wasted
 At the beloved breast.

. PRAYER

O TAKE me where you are—
 Open, make open wide!
 Dear, draw the very veils
 Of your inmost life aside!

Take me to the most secret
Dim altar of your breast,
There where your very self is,
Shut out from all the rest.

Drown out all other faces,
Dear, with your only face,—
All other selves with *your* self
There in that quiet place,

There where your very soul is,
There where all longings cease—
Open, and fold my sorrow
Into your beauty's peace!

LOVE AND PAIN

Like soft veil by veil dividing,
Now soft snow by snow divides
Falling softly, and leaves naked
The Spring's beauty, like a bride's.

Clear and cold her wet limbs sparkle
Through the woodland drenched in dew
And warm showers:—through the window
Windy buds and boughs shine through.

And a bird-note from the tree-tops,
Through the breast here in the dawn
Strikes, like a bright blade of beauty
Driven, like a blade withdrawn.

Ah sweet, now my sleepless sorrow
 Moves through darkness into day,
 Crush with your sweet self around me
 The old self in me away!

Not with words, ah not words only,
 Hush the pain that in me lives,—
 But with the immortal kindness
 Life to life forever gives!

So amid the greatest sadness
 Of my sorrow, shall I feel,
 Through blind tears, the lovely gladness
 'Round about my spirit steal.

Till my pain lies bared completely
 To your beauty, all my pain
 Bared completely, as the woodland
 To the kind and healing rain.

TO THE BELOVED

MORE sweet than another's pity,
 Dear, from your lips is pain,—
 Ah not for the touch of pity
 The heart of love is fain!

Pity is old and feeble,
 Pity has a mournful tongue—
 But O delight is cruel,
 Delight is well and young!

Better than another's pity
 Drowsing the heart like dew,
 Pain and the tumult of pain is,
 So that it come from you.

O better than all the gladness
 Of the world from east to west,
 One starlit hour of pain is
 And weariness at your breast!

At the wild, sweet lust of your bosom,
 Where the young blood laughs and sings,
 Panting with dear desire,
 And pitiless as the Spring's.

LONGING -

As a storm with shower and lightning
 That sweeps the ocean through,
 I would that I might hurry
 Now, to you, to you!

He pours his radiant fire
 From the ecstasy of his face,
 With tears and fiery laughter
 He bows to her embrace.

The deep, immaculate bosom,
 Silent, and fierce, and proud,
 In the most holy gladness
 Breaks, and sobs aloud.

O but to hurry now
 To you, at length, at length!
 Cover you with my love,
 And fill you with my strength,

Touch hands and lips and fingers
 In longing pure and white,
 And pour my spirit through you
 In the radiance of delight!

LOVE AND THE THOUGHT OF DEATH

SPRINGTIME is in the world,
 Her warm airs fill the gloom.
 A single ray of light
 Slips through the darkened room.

Alas how oft I feared
 To render up my breath,
 Ere I had tasted love,
 Into the waste of death.

But now even to my heart
 Her pitying heart descends,
 Across my very breast
 The sacred bounty bends,

And the saving spirit of Life,
 Your radiant womanhood:—
 Love lies dumb and baffled
 For wordless gratitude.

Love laughs through blinded lashes,
As dimly through his tears,
At last, at last, at last,
The reverent bounty nears!

Let me lean up my thirst,
Here in the Spring, and slake
Life at the source of life!—
Lean up my lips that ache!

O all your woman's beauty,
Bowed down like a laden bough
Heavy with burden of bounty,
Has drooped across me now!

O the whole spirit of Springtime
Has caught me in embrace,
April and April's kindness
Have bowed across my face!

O the world is full of bounty
And the Springtime's starry breath!
Love has conquered Life,
And Life has conquered Death!

THE TEMPLE OF THE SOUL

Your body is like a cathedral,
Whose stately arches and strong
Were raised to triumphant music
And the rhythm of reverent song.

In her secret and shady places,
 The curves of her shadow clings,
 Like incense under dim arches,
 An odor wild as the Spring's,

A scent, as of sunburnt islands,
 O'er the waters wafted afar.
 Through the labyrinth of your bosom
 Where the somber silences are,

Through the hush, through the choir of your bosom
 Like an organ's I hear it roll,
 In the thunderous anger of beauty,
 The pulse of the wrath of your soul.

The arch of your body's endurance,
 The span of your beauty's strength
 Is a door to the mystery dread:
 Your body's rhythmical length,

With murmurous walls all surrounded,
 Is the hushed and the holy abode
 Of a flame on the altars eternal,
 A flash of the beauty of God!

. COMPLETION

WHEN in the arms of the beloved I lie
 The whole world breaks into one flower of Spring,
 Buds burst, stars shine, and to the nightingales
 Around us, all the sleepless woodlands ring.

Joy moves to ecstasy with every pulse
 And Love toward Loveliness with every breath;
 Life shines completed, and the veil of fear
 Falls from the solemn and kind face of Death.

ECHOES

I LEAN at the breast belovèd
 And hear, as in the shell,
 The inarticulate moan,
 Where God is murmuring still,—

Some echo of the far ocean,
 Fading with every breath,—
 The moan of the blood belovèd
 Pouring on toward death.

REPOSSESSION

ALIEN and remote the whole day long
 You seem to me, and all the crowded day
 The outer selves and faces from my heart
 Crowd the sweet self and face of you away.

Till the long twilight deepens into dusk
 And the gray evening comes, then am I yours,
 Then in my heart the blood-beat of your heart
 Through gates of memory summons me and lures.

Then when the myriad outer faces fade,
 The stress and turmoil of the long day passed,
 Breathless, and face to face amid the dark,—
 O then amid the silences at last,

When the dim room is darkened, and the world
 Fades with the barring of the silent door,
 All other selves forever you crush out,
 Sweet, with yourself around me evermore!

Ah then amid the darkness and the peace
 Around us, veiled, inviolate and vast,
 Even by your touch, even by your trembling, sweet
 I know your very self again at last!

• LIFE PERSUASIVE

AH sweet, from my lips you steal
 The very life away,—
 To be shed on the lips of the Springtime
 That here at my own to-day

Hang close and tug insistent:
 Ever your beauty lures
 The ardent life between us
 To pass from my breast to yours.

O the sweet, the insistent Springtime
 That hangs here at my heart,
 Drinking the very life
 With thirsty lips apart!

The urgent, embodied Springtime
 That lures my love to live,
 That hangs here at my heart
 Whispering, "Give—Give!"

THE REFUGE

DEAR, the deft Nature and the Love that wrought thee
 Fitted thy breast with kindness to my breast,
 And the compassionate Tenderness that thought thee
 Made thee a refuge for me and a rest.

Ah 'mid the world's innumerable faces
 And million arms flung open to embrace,
 I fly to thee; amid a myriad places
 I seek thee only and thine only face!

For from myself thy beauty liberates me,
 And from all other selves, set free and lost
 In the one being that still recreates me
 And mixes me with all I love the most.

Thou art the one, sweet loveliness forever
 Farthest from all that I must ever be
 And still have been: wherefore my spirit ever
 Hastens with love and longing on to thee.

The unreachable Paradise beyond my sorrow,
 Toward which my lonely longing ever moves,
 The light that lures me on beyond To-morrow,
 All that my spirit labors for and loves!

PARTING IN SPRING

I

We shall not live to see the light of June
Together, You and I,
Ere the young moon, ere the young thrush's tune,
Our love must die.

Each breath we haste
But to one hour with hearts and lips that throb,
Then—and the waste
Widens between our bosoms with a sob.

With the glad Spring
All glad lives flower toward the sweet life to come,
Flower and sing:
Only your heart here at my heart is dumb.

With the glad Spring
All sweet lives blossom and burst and flower new-
blown,
Reflower and sing
And shed new hope, except our love alone.

Even the kind stars of this month that see
Our love laid breast to breast—
O sweet, shall see your breast laid far from me,
As the East from the West!

II

Now breaks the first bud on the bending spray,
But Thou and I must part,
Now April leans with trembling lips at May,
Thy heart, sweet, at my heart.
Now clings the swallow to the hawthorne tree,
But I must go from Thee.

Now pours the young tulip forth her odorous love
To the nightingale along,
Now answers the nightingale from the boughs above
With running song:
Ere April's self has flowed into sweet May
I shall be far away.

Now all sweet flowers quicken into birth
At the bosom kind and bright
Of the dear Spring, now all things in the earth
Mingle with one delight
And waken to one hope, but Thou and I,—
Only our love must die!

Spring rings and all the woodlands east and west
Ring with a million songs,
Life hastens to the beloved from the loving breast,
To the breast where life belongs:
Ere Spring has ceased our love must cease to be—
But what of Thee and Me!

.

LONGING AND PAIN

THE call of a bird from the woodland—
In my body a slow, sweet pain,—
O my body is drenched and filled with you
As the earth with the April rain!

To the call of the bird in the woodland
Answers a voice in my heart,—
Up through my aching pulses
Your pulses tremble and start.

O would I were yours again wholly,
Flooded again and again
With yourself, that am grown already
So full of that slow, sweet pain!

O would I were yours again wholly,
And all my sorrow again
Lay bared, my pain to your beauty,
As the earth to the April rain!

SLEEPLESS NIGHT

NIGHTLONG full of bitter longing
Slumberless I tossed and fain,
But the thought of you at morning
Soothed away the touch of pain.

The warm April rain was falling,
 The first bird-notes woke again,—
 And the thought of you came falling
 Softly on my heart like rain.

Till the rain kissed sleep aslumber,
 Till sleep kissed away my pain,—
 And I dreamed that I was lying
 At your very breast again.

LOVE'S PRAYER.

GIVE me yourself, dear;
 Not the sweet hands,
 Eyes, or lips only
 Loving demands:

Not the mere outward,
 Alien and lonely—
 Ah not the hands,
 The dear beauty only!

I thirst, I thirst!
 Bare me your soul;
 Let the sweet waves of it
 Crowd to me, roll

In on my spirit
 To flood and enfold:
 Be kind, dear, be kind,—
 Nothing withhold!

LONGING AND PAIN

THE call of a bird from the woodland—
In my body a slow, sweet pain,—
O my body is drenched and filled with you
As the earth with the April rain!

To the call of the bird in the woodland
Answers a voice in my heart,—
Up through my aching pulses
Your pulses tremble and start.

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 Eyes, or lips only
 Loving demands:

Not the mere outward,
 Alien and lonely—
 Ah not the hands,
 The dear beauty only!

I thirst, I thirst!
 Bare me your soul;
 Let the sweet waves of it
 Crowd to me, roll

In on my spirit
 To flood and enfold:
 Be kind, dear, be kind,—
 Nothing withhold!

Give me yourself,
 The inmost, the best
 One soul of all souls,
 Hid deep in your breast!

SPRING-SORROW

How often have I thrilled you
 With joy and the pulse thereof!
 Thrilled you and filled you all through,
 Sweet, with my living love!

How often have I felt you
 Tremble to my pulses, sweet,
 Flutter all through and tremble
 From the forehead even to the feet!

Ah Spring returns and the flowers,
 Springtime and flowers and rain,—
 But one sweet moment forever
 Returns, ah never again!

WEARINESS IN SPRING

ALL love-songs and the inner sense
 Of every song and singing word
 Are consummated in the cry
 Of any woodland bird.

Alas for the blind pain of speech
 That struggles toward the starry heights,
 Language in labor, and the soul
 That would grasp the Infinite's!

Alas for the blind pain of speech
 And all the strife to comprehend!
 The cry of any woodland bird
 Has said it all in the end.

MOMENTS

THE wind
 Lies down upon the long, sweet, heaving waste
 That sobs beneath his beauty, all the sea
 Trembles like a young virgin about to love—
 A tender silence fills the whole world around:
 So once have I felt you tremble

LOVE IN THE RAIN

ONCE my heart to your heart, dear,
 Lay bared, to your beauty my pain,
 And life to the life beside it,
 And both to the April rain.

The warm, the white rain was falling
 Across us, and swiftly our tears
 Ran down with the rain, and mingled,
 'Ere the long thirsty years.

O anguish and ecstasy blended, —
 Tears and the rain and delight
 Mingled, and pain with beauty,
 And life with life in the night,

For the last time forever
 'Ere the long, thirsty years;—
 O eagerly pain and beauty
 Mingled with laughter and tears!

Ah for that one fleet moment,
 That perfect moment again
 Of tears and love and the Springtime,
 Ecstasy, darkness and rain!

REMEMBRANCE

THE twilight falls.

I hear the children singing. A robin calls
 Through the fast-fading twilight, and the sky
 Deepens to ardent loveliness. But I
 Dream of the look of the beloved face
 Seen in the clasp of a last, long embrace
 Once, in a far-off land, 'mid thunder's sound
 And ecstasy of the nightingales around
 Among the dripping boughs, and lightnings bright
 Between the twilight and the dawning light,
 When all about the silence of our pain
 Fell the soft kindness of the soothing rain;

Seen once through swift and blinding tears from
 above,
 The face beloved in the moment of love,
 And breast like a moonlit sea without a breath,
 Where the rapture of love had set the peace of death!

THE GREAT WISH

To love you and die, sweet, that were the best!
 To drink of you once nor 'waken again
 To aught unkind, but happily slain,—
 No more longing and no more pain,
 With love at the fullest and life at the best,
 To sink into rest,
 To sink into sleep from the heaven of your breast,—
 That were the best!

Having lived, having loved, to the full of life's
 power,
 Having had your beauty one whole sweet hour,
 With no space between of unlovelier breath,
 From the rapture of love to the rapture of death
 To be hurled,—from your breast, from your breast
 bare and bright
 Sobbing reckless along in the rage of delight,
 At your breast, at your breast, to the consummate
 night
 To sink through the love-sleep, and ebb into rest;
 That were the best!

Ah to sink from the noon-tide of love, when the noon
 Lies heavy on life, and the earth in the swoon
 Of the bride-sleep is hushed, when the shadowless
 hour

Broods perfect and prone on the world, and each
 flower

To the core with perfection's fulfillment is thrilled,
 And the birds in the woodland for rapture are stilled,
 —Longing and beauty and sorrow fulfilled—

O drunkenly, wearily, blessedly slain!

Yours at last, yours at last, to sink into rest,

Yours at last, yours at last, from the heaven of your
 breast

To sink into rest,—

No more longing and no more pain,

And no more pain!

GENTLE HANDS

OUTSIDE I hear upon the window-pane,

Half through my sleep, the soft touch of the rain

Pleadingly, like the touch of gentle hands

From far away. O on the borderlands,

Starry and dim, 'ere the first quiet breath

Of sleep, as on the dim borderlands of death,

The thought of the first beloved returns again,—

Of the dear hands, the hands that first held up

Even to our lips the sacrificial cup,

Bounteous and brave, the dear, the compassionate
 hands!

I hear soft hands upon the window-pane.

I hear the soft sound of the rushing rain.
 I see them there, the quiet, the folded hands,
 In the last sleep long hushed and laid away;
 Let me kneel down beside you here to pray!
 Let me kiss off your bitter stain of blood
 Here, with the hot tears of my gratitude!
 O bounteous hands! O dear, first hands that gave
 The immortal kindness, compassionate and brave,
 Dear hands, whose memory nothing may destroy
 Felt ever around in the Springtime of our joy!
 Dear, generous hands, let me kneel down and weep!

 I feel soft hands come pleading through my sleep.

SONG

ALAS you were my youth, my youth!—
 My love ran on to greet you,
 Sweet, at the fall of your luring feet—
 My life ran on to meet you.

And when, with your head at my heart, you shed
 Wild tears for your only lover,
 Wild tears as for one already dead,
 And kissed me over and over,

O sweet, and hung at my heart and clung,
 For agony, so to grieve me!
 I knew it was my youth, my youth,
 Was trying then to leave me.

I knew it was my youth, my youth,
And O when you departed
My youth and I had said good-bye,
And I was broken-hearted!

DEFIANCE

Now let Death come when he will—
At the belovèd breast
I have leaned, I have taken my fill
Of the one thing the best.

Into the pitiless lands
Still shall I bear with me
Some touch of the lips, the hands,—
That kindest memory.

THE UNIVERSE AND THE BELOVED

It is your love and not the radiant light
That fills the lonely and the sunset lands,
When evening o'er the broad and billowing waste
Hallows the silences with hovering hands.

When westward o'er worn sunset's wrath the Void
Widens with luminous rapture calm and bright,
O most serene and liberating soul,
Your spirit widens there with vast delight!

In the huge agony of the sunset's waste
Your burning love is sacrificed and slain,
Your being rearises in the west,
Crowning with starry peace the close of pain.

Even as the sunrise from his single self
Frees the last star, lost in her light above,
So from myself you liberate myself
Lost in the widening daylight of your love.

I feel you and I breathe you and I live
When in the winnowed east the stars die out:
In the august magnificence of noon
Your golden glory folds me 'round about.

Where suns are and the flaming thrones of life,
There is your habitation and abode,
In the unwearied love that sways the world,
Among the stars, and at the heart of God.

O and where the huge passion of the storm
Lifts, with excited laughter of delight,
Lashed lightnings: there your radiant passion reigns,
And in the orbits of the Infinite!

How shall I fly you, where shall I be fled?
Still follows the one thought of you along,
Flashes like lightning through my singing soul
And shatters all the thunders of my Song.

EXALTATION

Song here closes with worn longing
In her thought from whose embrace
First, broke all his fiery ardors
And the circuits of his race.

To the breast where he has lavished
All his beauty in the past,
Love with ecstasy surrenders
All his life again at last.

O the one face most beloved
Aureoled 'mid a myriad faces,
The one breast that bears the secret
'Mid Creation's myriad races!

Known by heart the one dear body!
The dear lips, well worn, well known!
Faithful to one life forever,
Loyal to one soul alone,

Still Love bears upon his bosom
Toward the stars with every breath,
The dear burden that he loves so,
His at last in life and death;

Under sun and moon and starlight
Lifting upward sleeplessly,
Lapsing in long lines of beauty,
Like the bosom of the sea:

With exhaustion most exalted
And new longing newly born,
With seraphic pain triumphant
And high weariness outworn.

DEFEATED SONG

ALAS, at last Song's wandering wing-ways reach
The Beauty that thrones triumphant beyond speech,
The holiest Beauty! In the most hallowed place
Forevermore he hides his holy face,
'Mid starriest heaven lost astray afar,
And breathless for awe of Beauty, like a star.

■

VII

IRMA

*O lovely fallen angel
Out of the heaven of love!
That seeks in vain to recapture
Her place in heaven above.*

*O lovely fallen angel!
O beautiful lost star!
Wandering now and errant
In the wide wastes afar.*

*Could I but replace you
In highest heaven above,
Could I only heal you
With my living love,*

*I would fold you, as the morning
Her star; when night is passed,—
Into the hushed longing
Of my love at last!*

A PORTRAIT

IRMA has sweet eyes and young,
A strange and maiden air,
Laughter lies upon her lips
And sunlight on her hair.

Here in her sweet, slight body once
An angel had his home
Some years ago, but now, alas,
His feet are forced to roam.

The angel of herself he was
And bore her very name—
One day into the temple broke
Together, Lust and Shame.

At the strange sound of alien tongues
He hid his face and fled,
But still her body moves about
As though she were not dead.

And seeking still she knows not what
She wanders like a ghost,
Half-gay, half-sad: she hardly knows
It is herself she lost.

Yet if one knocking at her heart
Should seek to enter in,
Nothing within it will he find
Except the worm within.

And if Love ever now should come
To knock upon the door,
Out of the hollow tomb no love
Makes answer evermore.

Strange is it sometimes still to hear
'Mid the false tongues about,
With simple beauty and austere
Her native self speak out.

Like the grave voice of one long dead
It falls upon the ear
And vanishes, and then we know
She is no longer here.

Irma has sweet eyes and young,
A strange and maiden air,
Laughter lies upon her lips
And sunlight on her hair.

A FALLEN ANGEL

THROUGH the cold brilliance of the crowded street
One night-time passing, on my arm I felt
The touch of one like Memory come from behind,
And a beloved voice that greeted me
With the old name: pausing, I turned about.

Strange was the face, and tragical the eyes
 That met me, the worn smile upon the lips,
 The sorrowful, gay clothes, the veiled, small form,—
 A ghost, a horror, it stood beside me there,
 Sinister, harsh; hardly my heart had guessed,
 Save for that same, familiar joke of yours.

Light of my youth, alas and was it you!—
 Not glad the laughter that you gave me then.

That all that I had longed for ever the most
 All should possess, but I your lover alone,
 To hold in mockery; all that the most I loved,
 Lost to me only—this I could forgive.
 But that with the old, sweet look of the eyes, how oft,
 (Ah seen how often in the great days before!)
 You sought to lure me to so much less than this,
 One with the rest, the vilest and the most mean;
 O sweet, even with those eyes, my pride, my youth,
 My Springtime once, and the heaven of all my prayer!
Me, who had given my love of life away
 To save you from the least touch: this broke my heart.

THE ANGEL RETURNS

AGAINST my shoulder you leaned your head,
 You closed the page of the silent book.
 The strange, still twilight about us spread,
 I felt your presence around me shed,
 Your beauty trembled, your body shook.
 —Against my shoulder I felt your head.

Almost around me it seemed to steal,

For one, sweet respite that little hour,
The self that I longed for you to reveal,
Almost about me I seemed to feel

Your whole, sweet womanhood break into flower:
—The self that I loved I seemed to feel.

An angel once was sitting beside me:

—Till sudden I wake at those words you said,
The heart that mocks and the lips that deride me—
Where is the face of the angel fled?
O life that I loved so are you dead!
—Who is this ghost that sits beside me?

SONG FOR A JIG

I HAD a sweet, a pretty sweet—
But O she did deceive me!
I found her on another breast.
Ah cruel t'was to leave me.

Alas I gave her all my youth,
Nor ever had I guessed it—
All that I loved in all the world
That all the world possessed it.

“O sweet, what refuge is there left
If all was known before me—
And is it true there was no love
In all the love you bore me,

“And is it true that every kiss
Was mockery the merest—
And were you never really mine—
My darling—O my dearest!

“What makes your eyes so merry, dear,
What makes your lips so cheery,
When all the heart within is dead,
And all the world is dreary!”

To do as though I did not care—
It was my mood and pleasure:
Around the room, amid the rest
I danced a jolly measure.

But though my feet deceive you, sweet,
My heart cannot deceive you.
Though Love you left forevermore,
Yet Love will never leave you.

DISCORDS

You flung the window full into the light
Of sunset widening o'er the golden rooves:
A single organ jangled from the square—
Full in the radiance the hushed city lay.

O then for the one time the iron mask
Fell from the woman's heart, wide arms you spread
Of longing, with an inarticulate cry,
And a new wonder reached through all your face.

Each tress, each loop, each wave and line of you,
Your very self, girlish and grave you stood,
Defiant and mysterious to the end.

Silence prevailed: but Tony looking up,
Doglike, with baffled eyes into your own,
Restively, with a troubled cry arose.

Pity you would not, you could never bear.
Then flashed the anger from your eyes with tears
Suddenly dimmed, your sweet hands clenched in rage,
As agony, you spurned him with a blow.

Sharp cries of pain, ridiculous, rent the air.
The organ faded, the wide light went out,—
Westward the beauty withered line on line.

THE TWO SELVES

IN the hush of the morning my heart lies dreaming
Of the old self that you used to be,
I feel the self of your early beauty
Bend at my bedside over me,—
Of the self that I loved my heart lies dreaming.

Eurydice once came up through the darkness,
When one looked backward with longing, and lo
It ebbed from his arms the whole sweet beauty!
Remembering, I look backward so:—
The face beloved sinks back in the darkness.

Vainly, vainly I try to remember
The old sweet look of the eyes and head.
The self that you are comes up between us,—
And O, my dear, I would I were dead!—
The morning dawns, but I try to remember.

A GLIMPSE OF HER

AROUND about us the dusk city lay
Before we parted. In the sunset light,
Your arms filled up with flowers gathered in
That afternoon from country-ways, you stood.

Shy looking up, some urchin of the street
For one stray blossom begged, which stooping down
You granted him, and then with suddenness
Your whole sweet wealth of beauty gave away;
O bounteous, O most adorable,
Transfigured there in one swift act of love!

You turned to go, but from your lips escaped
Some joke, too sordid and too mean for you,
For your magnanimous and gracious ways,—
Hurting the heart, too trivial, too mean.

O you unwilling, you most willful one!
O you sad mystery, you riddle, you!
I heard your laughter dying down the street.

THE LOST PARADISE

My own is like a desolated house,
Where Love and Faith lie dead,
A garden, in the Springtime of the year
With all her flowers shed,
Beauty and laughter in her face abide,
Only the heart is dead.

Love came, and weary, at the golden gate
Pleaded to enter in,
A mournful laughter greeted him with jeers
And ghosts of subtle sin
Drew him across the threshold, with a kiss
Lured him to enter in.

O had he only come a space before
To take her by the hand!
Even yet, perhaps, even yet they might have stood
Safe in the wonderland—
Even yet they might have entered—nevermore
Now, will she understand.

Faintly she strove to ape a little love,
But in her eyes he read
Only a ghastly hint funereal,—
O sweet, and are you dead!
O sweet, and is your bosom but a tomb—
Alas, and are you fled!

Fair is her face and flowerlike to view
Of roses white and red,
Her eyes are full of memories to Love,—
Only the heart is dead,
A garden, an abandoned Paradise,
Whose angels all are fled.

A DANCE WITH DEATH

“GOOD-BY, good-by, forever!”
Across your throat you drew it,
The quaint, enameled curio,
My carven Arab knife,

With many a mocking gesture:
Where the white throat had rested
Clung one sweet drop of life-blood
Warm from your living heart.

Till far from you, you flung it,
And danced around about me,
And filled the room with laughter,
To mock my sober eyes.

The Sunday bells were ringing
In through the open window,
The city in the sunlight
Basked, as if asleep.

O wanton, wild and wondrous,
 O tragic and most youthful,
 For a playtime, for a pastime,
 To feign a dance with death!

Still on the blade the stain lies,—
 Your young, sweet, reckless life-blood:
 “Good-by, good-by, forever!”—
 I hear your mocking voice.

ON AN OLD PICTURE

Look on this picture, Love, for this is she
 Whom now we serve, ere the first virgin grace
 Had left the earnest innocence of the face,
 Or shame had weighed the lips down wearily.

She stands before you in pure girlish-wise,
 Brave, with a breast immaculate like the Spring's,
 Full of sweet pity and all tender things,—
 And fronts the future with undaunted eyes

Pure as the day's ere dusk has made them sad.
 Ah, Spring and her flowers return as once before,
 But this one face returns not any more:—
 A little phantom with firm eyes and glad,

Wistful,—a little eager, innocent ghost
 That hate has robbed you of and lust has slain
 Forevermore! Look on this face again,
 O Love, for this is she whom you have lost!

AN ANGEL IN HELL

I saw one drag her loveliness along
Painfully through the twilight of the street,
'Mid wanton gibes and buffeting of men.

Laughable were her motions, where she went
Laughter of mockery greeted her with jeers:
Once through the deepening distances she turned,

Seeking the eyes of one that followed on;—
Lo—that look I had seen it once before
Shine from the dearest face in all the world!

Ah, the look that lures in a woman's eyes,
Meant for her lover's heart, and his alone—
Begging from every face that hurried past!

Laughable were her motions, where she went
Laughter of mockery greeted her with jeers—
But, O, she had the eyes of my first love!

AN AUGUST NIGHT

ONCE upon a night, a starry night in August,
Lying on my bed, wrapt in lonely dreams,
Broke a slender figure in upon my dreaming,
Touched me on the cheek, tried to say good-by.

Like a ghost it was, yet knew I it was living,
 'Round about its brow clung a crown of thorns
And the eyes were brave but sad and very tired,—
 Felt I it had come, then, to say good-by.

Close against my heart I caught it full of longing,
 And it offered me, willing, weary lips
As of old, upon them the bitter tears I tasted.
 Then I knew 'twas he, knew it was my Youth.

At its feet I fell and begged it for forgiveness,
 But it only turned back into the dark;
But it was too proud and weary to make answer,
 Only lifted up ever listless lips.

Till it clung and held me as a little child might,
 Covered me with kisses, covered me with tears,
Sobbed against my breast in passionate abandon;
 And without a sound vanished in the gloom.

Struggling from my dream I groped toward the
 window,—
 The city in the night lay august and dead,
All the sultry street was heavy with veiled odors,—
 Suddenly you passed, Tony at your side.

Soft across my face a breath of musk and perfume
 Swept, beneath the lamp back you turned a while:
Then I knew the face, the face that I had dreamed
 of,—
 Almost as one dead to mine eyes you seemed

For a single moment! You passed into the darkness,
Like a fallen angel groping for return,
Or a little ghost across the somber city
Wandering ever on, seeking its own soul.

LOVE KNOCKS AT THE DOOR

In the pain, in the loneliness of love
To the heart of my sweet I fled.
I knocked at the door of her living heart,
"Let in—let in—" I said.

"What seek you here?" the voices cried,
"You seeker among the dead"—
"Herself I seek, herself I seek,
Let in—let in!" I said.

They opened the door of her living heart,
But the core thereof was dead.
They opened the core of her living heart—
A worm at the core there fed.

"Where is my sweet, where is my sweet?"
"She is gone away, she is fled.
Long years ago she fled away,
She will never return," they said.

"FLOWERS FOR LOVE OR DEATH"

SOFT flowers, dear, I press into your hand,
Sweet as your face is sweet,
Shy buds and blooms the wayward Springtime sheds
For a sacrifice at your feet.

Your eyes look up to mimic the old way—
But O their light is fled—
It is as if into your hands I press
Flowers for one long dead.

LOVE IN HELL

"LOVES me," and "loves me not," with careless hands
From the soft, wounded flower-face you tore
The petals, falling 'round you one by one.

Impatient, ere the last, sad, tell-tale leaf,
And guessing some denial ere you knew,
Into the flames you tossed it with a jest.

The shuddering flower writhed amid the flare.
Lo,— her miscounted petals, one by one,
Whispering a "loves you" from the heart of hell!

HEAVENWARDS

With rapture of longing
I lift you above
To the heaven of love,
With surging and thronging

Wide wings of my anguish
Strained upward to save,
Lift you up from the grave
Where living you languish!

Let my love be as dew to you,
Quicken and heal:—
O my perished one, feel
My live longing thrill through to you!

Have I not thrilled you,
Warmed you, and pressed
Your breast to my breast,
With my ecstasy filled you,

Caught you up here to me
Close at my cheek?
Speak to me—speak
Some word of sweet cheer to me!

Nay—'tis a ghost,
The horrible head
On my bosom lies dead,—
The life that I lost.

O radiant and ravishing,
Lovely enough,
'Tis a ghost that I love!
O radiant and ravishing!

Hushed the dim weight
 On the heart of my breast
 I bear without rest,
 The horror I hate.

The winds follow after:
 Embracing I bear
 The lovely despair,—
 Heaven rings with my laughter,

“ ’Tis a ghost that I love!
 ’Tis a ghost that I love!”—
 On my bosom I bear it
 To heaven above.

A WOMAN'S HANDS

YOUR hands are still unchanged for all of you,
 Tired they look and worn, but still the same—
 The memory to me of your very self.

Much have they suffered and much bitter guilt
 Has visited them, but left them all unstained:
 Still the old gracious innocence they have,
 Their maiden purity and mute appeal.

O bounteous hands that have given their all away
 To lips that spurned them even as they took!
 Dear, generous hands, compassionate and brave,
 Fashioned to hold against the lips of life
 The cup of the lovely kindness, wondering!

Dear, gentle hands of the sacrificial scars,
 After all shame and violence virgin yet,
 Inviolable, mysterious to the end,—
 I know you still, the sacred, the woman's hands!

MEMORY'S TOUCH

I SAT beside you after the division
 Of many clouded days of fatal portent,
 I dared not utter to your heart that knew not
 The ominous hint that in my heart I bore.

For I was sorrowful and very tired,
 The tragic twilight closed around about us:
 I could not love you as I once had loved you,
 That bitter meaning in those shameful eyes.

Alas, across our love a somber shadow
 Had cast its wings of hovering disaster,
 And to a dream of terror and foreboding
 Our life of love was likened from the first!

Beside your phantom and your haunted body
 Myself, a phantom, sat amid the darkness:
 I heard the autumn rain across the window,—
 The twilight deepened, it was time to go.

I heard the autumn rain across the window,
 "Ah, could I but again with eyes of wonder
 Look up into that face so sweet and tired,
 The guileless beauty that I loved before!"

Alas, my cold caresses were all loveless
 And cold the lips that trembled to deceive you,
 I pressed you like a ghost against my bosom,
 Half-trembling through the anguish of my tears.

And to your face that strove so hard to mimic
 Some look of the old rapture, as I took it
 Returned a shadow of the old, brave beauty
 The eyes had shone with in the days before.

Ere all their grace was turned into a pleading,
 And all their dear commanding to derision.
 O sweet, not guessing, arduous and urgent,
 You drew me up against your very side!

Abashed we sat and full of weary hatred:
 What voice was that that called so soft between us,
 As if to lead us back again together?—
 The voice of Love that calls his children home,

His sulky children with immortal sorrow.
 O, hark—that pleading touch upon the window
 Of possibilities and poignant have-beens,
 Dim rain and darkness, solitude and love!

BEHIND THE MASK

THE music danced and laughed aloud,
 The music laughed and cried aloud,
 You stepped into the whirling dance
 With gay and weary eyes.

You laughed and sang, you danced and sang,
 The music laughed and danced and sang—
 Your heart upon another's heart,—
 The music laughed and cried.

I see you still, I hear you still,—
 It was not you that danced at all,
 I knew it all, I knew it all,
 Alas, my sweet, alas!

THE DEAD SELF

You show me the picture, the old dim picture,—
 The look of your face in the earlier years,
 The brave, bright eyes and the quiet forehead,—
 Sudden the room swims 'round in tears.—
 I see the face of the faded picture.

The breath of your bosom comes harder and faster,
 Closer against me you sink your head,
 As one long dead, together we weep it,
 As one that is slain, as one that is fled,—
 Your eyelids flutter, your breath comes faster.

Bravely your eyes look up to meet me,
 Bravely, to mimic the old, sweet way:
 But the look is fled and the eyes are altered,
 The room lies dead. There is nothing to say.—
 There is something missed in the eyes that meet me.

In the April rapture, the glory of Springtime,
Cheated and dumb two ghosts we lean,—
The face that is fled, the face that is vanished
Laughs like an innocent child between.
I hear a sob in the music of Springtime.

THORNS

You reached your arms out to the little child,—
Some tousled rascal tumbling down the street,—
A hopeful longing flooded all your form
And the old tenderness your eager eyes.

Your hands were full of roses as you stooped
To take him,—to your heart you caught him up,—
Full of sweet roses like yourself; the thorns
Hurt the small body that spurned you with a cry.

LOVE'S CRY

"O give me of the bounty of your being,
Your very love, your uttermost compassion!
I faint, I fail, for loneliness I perish—
O take me to yourself and fold me in,

"Safe in the healing quiet of your bosom,
Beyond the world and all her hollow hatred!
O be the self my love of you would have you,
Hush with yourself my bitter doubt of you!"

Across my lips she laid her lips all loveless
 With bitter kisses and unmeaning laughter,
 With many a lure to ape the immortal pity
 And cheat Love's sorrow with a little lust,

To darken the wet lids of Love with laughter.
 "Alas, and are you one with all the others!
 O love, my love, and what of all my loving!—
 O sweet, I hate you, and I spurn you here!"

LOVE'S ANGER

Too late it is now, dear, to love you—
 Your body's sorrowful shame,
 Your loveliness all desecrated
 And those eyes—ah, no longer the same!

The virgin self deep within you
 I loved, that is vanished and fled.
 O heart, that I once might have loved so!
 O life that I loved are you dead!

Who murdered my best beloved
 And stole me my love away,
 Or ever my heart had known it,
 Or ever my lips could say?

I knock at your breast like an angel
 At heaven's unopening door—
 No voice of the old self within you
 Makes answer forevermore.

I beat at your breast like an angel
At the portals of Paradise,
And a hint of the lost, sweet girlhood
Looks up at me out of your eyes:

As a memory from an old picture
Looks up at one full of grace,
Your earnest and innocent spirit,
The old, sweet look of the face.

It is gone, it is vanished forever:
But enough I have read there to know
How much I could love you, my lost one,
Could I have you as long ago.

Ah, be what I fain would have thought you,
Or I perish, I fail, I am lost!
And have you no comfort to give me,
But this cold smile like a ghost,

No tenderness for my sorrow,
No love to answer and greet!
O would that I never had known you—
O my slain one, my sorrow, my sweet!

Would that I never had known you,
Would that your body, my child,
Were scattered abroad to the heavens,
Rescattered and undefiled!

Where perished and re-arisen,
Virgin again and free,
A wave in the wave-ways of ocean,
A star from the streams of the sea!

A SONG

SWEET she is and full of fleetness,
Like a flash of summer lightning,—
Beautiful and swift and blinding—
In the tragic night,

That reveals the shy recesses
Of some undiscovered forest,—
The dim coverts of her being,
Odorous with dusk.

Like a little mournful wild-rose,
Full of lovely, luring petals,
Bitter thorns and wounding beauty,
Piercing-sharp, but sweet!

A LAST APPEAL

TAKE these flowers, dear, and at your holy
Feet I fall and beg you for forgiveness,
Let me here against your quiet bosom
Weep my heart out in a waste of tears!

O could I but once again awake you!
O my own, if love of you could heal you,
Feel my love that trembles here to save you,
 Feel my living love around you, feel!

As one crazed, some voice beloved addresses,
Half-remembered from old days of gladness,
Even as one dead, upon your dumbness
 Beats my anguish like a wasted wave.

Wildered the strange eyes look up to greet me,
And the answer from the breast is vanished:
In the poor, pale hands so mute and helpless
 Rest the hopeful flowers of my prayer.

BITTERNESS

IN the night of the city, the silence supreme,
Love stands all discrowned of the beautiful dream.
Love's heart cries out to the heaven above,
"Give back, give back the heart that I love!

"City, give back the heart you have slain,
The life that you robbed me of give me again!
And *you* that have murdered some heart's best beloved
What will you give me for all that I loved?"

The silence around is the silence of Fate.
The heart of Love sobs in the anger of hate.
Love lifts the rage of his hands to the sky.
The heart of Love breaks in a passionate cry.

PARTING ON A BIRTHDAY

ALL happiness and love I would wish you, sweet,
Now that my life must leave you, on this day
That brought your dear face earthward on its way—
And shed my love as a sacrifice at your feet.

All joy and triumph I wish you ere we part,
Now that the Spring blooms the whole world around,
And all glad lives and all glad loves abound,—
Save in your heart that hangs here at my heart.

Would I could give you a better gift than this.
May beauty abide with you through all your days,
And Spring fall ever with kindness on your face,
As my love now in the wild prayer of a kiss!

So bending down as in the glad days before
I touch you, like a spirit in passing by,
Even as one already dead I cry,
“I love you”—and leave you then forevermore.

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

WALKING through the meadows on a summer morning,
From the storm afar sudden breaks a gleam
Flashed of lovely lightning, reckless and defiant,
Laughing for delight, like your living self.

Then I thought of you, dear angel of my boyhood,
I remembered then all the weary days,
All the bitter sorrow and all the bitter longing,
Vanished like a cloud, vanished like a dream.

O dear self I love so, that I sought and longed for,
In your living breast loved and sought in vain,
Shall I ever meet you in your native beauty,
Clasp you to my heart as you truly are!

Darker grows the storm that echoes back no answer.
Breaks a flash of lightning through the deeps afar,
Like your very self, reckless and defiant,
Laughing for delight far above it all!

FIRST NEWS

SPRINGTIME was clamorous in the woodlands 'round
And all the earth with flowers. Life at the lips
Of the old rapture leaned, when first I heard
The piteous tidings of you far away—
O foolish heart and most adorable
Self-slain, alas, sweet, with your own sweet hand!

Then I remembered that last walk we had
In the last Springtime: April at the world
Hung like a bride, the country near and far
Shone with a wistfulness most young and grave
And tender, her sweet shyness thrilled the air
Like a child's whisper. The first budding shoots
Yearned to you dumbly where you went, the trees

Reached tremulous fingers, and the whole, kind heart
 Of the young Springtime yearned to you and sighed,
 Where you passed careless, alien and blind,
 'Mid all her children the one banished one,
 Lost and defiant. Yea, amid the sweet
 Rare, virginal loveliness that lay around
 Some memory sad and touch of tawdry things,
 A breath of the dim city, your very self,
 You brought with you, bearing within your breast
 That murdered girlhood, all those memories:
 The wounded flowers at your feet looked up,
 And a new sadness darkened all the Spring.

Your young, sweet beauty filled me, but your words
 Shy and defiant, guarding all their woe,
 Some hint let slip, some secret evermore
 Of shameful things accepted carelessly,
 Taken for granted, all that outraged youth
 Following like a ghost.—O strange and sad
 It clung about you like a shadow there,
 That murdered girlhood tawdry and unsublime!

Then Love, even as the Spring, grew dark and drear,
 Beating with helpless wings against a tomb;
 Faded the beauty from his eyes and all
 His whole glad spirit of youth was ebbd away,
 And all his being blinded, his heart subdued
 To the dead Loveliness, whose arms about
 Hemmed in his heavenward flight, and all his lips
 Tamed and submissive to the sad lips that kissed
 His lips, all loveless, and drank the life out through.
 All weak and forgetful, all the high dream forgot,

With all his love at the most loveless bosom,
 At the dear tragic breast dumb as a tomb,
 Faint in the Spring he leaned in love with death.
 Sad and despoiled we leaned amid the Spring.

The sunset widened, the twilight called us home.
 I remember still, among the cherry trees
 You stood, the budding branches clung to you,
 So frail and sweet, so tragic and so dear,—
 One virgin flower at your breast! I seemed
 To hear as in your innocence they had rung
 Once, to some early lover, the last words
 (All meaningless now and empty) of your love;
 And carelessly I took them as they were worth.

But in the twilight about I seemed to feel,—
 Robbed of you now and all despoiled long since,
 The lovers of your girlhood's innocent youth
 That for those words had given their lives away.

LAST NEWS

At the door they found you of my empty chamber,
 Bowed upon the ground all that sacred head
 In the last, fierce pang of passionate defiance;—
 Groping toward the sill both your lovely hands.

How had they pursued you, hounded you, and hurt
 you,
 All those fiendish faces, hideous and abhorred!
 All my whole heart's anger here goes out to smite them,
 All my hatred here, in one bitter cry.

O my own strayed angel, wilful, wild, and wayward,
After all the hurt, to your home at last
Turned in the great need, and beating backward
vainly;
Mine, still mine at heart, mine in spite of all!

AT A BEDSIDE

I KNELT beside you where you lay at rest,
With small, sweet desperate mouth and folded hands,
Purer and much more virgin than the snow,
In the cold moonlight of immortal sleep.

April was in the air, but all around
The laboring city's tumult, rage and lust
Rolled like a sea; only within the room
It seemed a part of the dear Spring lay dead,
Here at your breast, calm as a moonlit wave,
And the hushed heavings of her starry peace.

Still the eternal riddle on your face
Shone, the enigma never to be solved.
No answer to that secret met me there—
A little delicate figure without flaw,
Defiant and mysterious to the end.

Cleansed of all stain in the clear fount of death,
Reverent you lay, and very virginal,
Breathless and faint, triumphant and serene,
And dumb with a new dignity at last.

Only upon the silence of your lips,
 Tenderly parted in an unfinished sigh,
 Only upon your lips there seemed to rest
 A thirst as if for some immortal thing:—
 Was it for love that you had never known?

TO HER

HEART of me, forgive me for the wrong I wrought you,
 Angel of my youth, hear me and forgive!
 If I ever meet you in the highest heaven,
 I will kiss the blood from your wounded feet.

FUNERAL CHAUNT

As a rose that on the garden
 Lies untimely dead,
 As a swallow ere the summer
 You are gone and fled.
 Carelessly you bore your sorrow—
 Bitter sin and shame,
 Carelessly, when you were weary,
 Blotted out your name.

CHORUS

As a flash of lightning,
 Swift and sweet and bright—
 So your heedless spirit
 Vanished in the night.

Childlike and but half-divining
 Through the world you went,
 Pain you found and fleeting pleasure
 Found, but not content:
 Cruel things you took for granted
 And unlovely sin,
 And your self-deceiving laughter
 Drowned the self within.

CHORUS

But the eternal Beauty
 Harbors no disdain,
 Spotless, to Her bosom
 Takes you back again.

What worm was there at the bud
 Of your natal day,
 What deep hardship drove you on
 Down the shameful way!
 Many lovers had you known
 And the pain thereof,
 But your breast had never leaned
 On the breast of Love.

CHORUS

Ah, you never knew them—
 The immortal eyes,
 And the sacred longing
 And the sacrifice!

So your heedless laughter rang
Down the baffling gloom
Till its echoes dwindled out,
Fading toward the tomb:
So at morning, like a dream,
Or a little ghost,
In the terror of the dawn
You were drowned and lost.

CHORUS

So your feet went blindly
Down the darkness, sweet—
But more swiftly after
Follow Memory's feet.

Wherefore did you hide yourself
Thus, amid the night!
Wherefore thus divide yourself
From the living light!
Had you waited, but a space
And they might have found you,
But a space the saving arms
Had been laid around you.

CHORUS

Though you turn your forehead
From the living sun,
We will not forget you
Till our race is run.

Yet within the commonness
Of your tired heart
Something like an angel dwelt,
Virgin and apart,—
Something shy and fleet and rare,
Holy and alone,
All unguessed at by the world—
To yourself unknown.

CHORUS

Something like the morning
When the light is new,
Fugitive and wistful
In the heart of you.

Something very dumb and strange,
Pure and undefiled,
Dwelt within you, virginal
As a little child.

CHORUS

Thus alone we think you,
Now your day is passed,
Lost amid the beauty
Of all Love at last!

LIGHTNING

IN a dream I once beheld you
Throned amid a throng of dancers,
In your hand you held a slender
Cup of foaming wine.

All the room was loud with music,
But without heaven's anger thundered:
Lifting it you drank with laughter,
"To the death of Love!"

Loud and long they all applauded.
To the very dregs you drained it,
Drank, and dashed it down with blinding
Tears:—the lightning flashed!

TRANSFIGURATION

AH, now your beautiful body
That bore such tragical stain,
Has slipped the robes of her sorrow,
Cast off the robes of her pain—
Your bared and beautiful body!

The compassionate Springtime has cleansed it
And bathed it pure as the snow,
Has healed it of all its fevers
And washed it white of its woe,—
The cooling rainfall has cleansed it.

Above your grave in the Springtime
I saw it, reborn again,
Laugh up through glad tear-drops, a flower
That swayed in the wind and the rain,
Drenched with the love of the Springtime.

RECOGNITION

STILL the starlight on the meadows
Slumbered, ere the break of morning,—
Far away the raging city
And her tumult seemed.

All around me like an ocean
Shrilled the soft cicadas' murmur.
Far off cried a little screech-owl,
Like a wandering soul.

Then I felt a girlish presence
Shed around me and a perfume
Breathed as from a quiet bosom:
Moving like a cloud,

Over the still dews drew near me,
Luminous, serene, and fragrant,
Softly, a girl-shape in shadow,
And the eyes were grave.

All the sadness from the features,
All the cruelty had vanished,
And the face was very lovely
Like a little child's.

The clear wind of dawn had purged it
Of all ecstasies and sorrows,
Of all stain had wholly cleansed it
And all memories.

Like a cloud it drifted nearer,
All around I felt the aura
Of some self beloved, the garments
Odorous with dusk.

Then I first beheld the angel
I had longed for, I had loved so,
Virgin as the wind of morning.—
'Twas your very soul.

And I reached my arms to clasp it,
But it laid a silent finger
Soft across the lips, the eyelids
Smiled upon my tears.

Not a syllable it uttered,
But I saw that it forgave me.
Deep within the eyes I read it,
All it would have said.

ESCAPE

In my songs my heart is prisoned,
In my songs my love lies buried,
Sweet, alas, within these pages
Lies my living soul,

Prisoned from you in these poems:
 And the self I strove to catch here
 Dead it lies between the letters,—
 All that I have loved.

O my slain one, my belovèd,
 Are you lost to me forever!
 Blacker grows the storm above me—
 Suddenly beyond,

Bright across the black, a rainbow
 Flashes,—lo, your very presence
 Poured, a radiance, a promise,
 Shining spans afar!

Through the widening rifts of heaven
 Winging cleaves a bird, my spirit,
 Singing runs along to greet you,
 Lost amid the light!

TRIUMPH

THE native grandeur of the soul,
 Praise be to God forever!
 Praise be to God, nor lust, nor crime,
 Nor hatred, nor the hand of Time,
 Nor ravage of the years that roll—
 No—nor all things forever:
 Not ugliness, not all the whole
 Heaped weight of passions that control,
 Nor temporal tumult unsublime
 Can crush out, wholly, ever!

VIII

SONGS BEYOND DEATH

*In the blind universe of worlds and years
I am drowned out, extinguished and destroyed.
Only of me there lingers in the Void
This fiery trail of memories and of tears.*

*O all men yet to be under the sky!
O you, unborn, who yet shall read this rhyme!
Here is my voice imprisoned for all time,—
This, that you feel this moment, this is I.*

CONFESSION

AN, all my life a shadow and a ghost
 'Midst laughing men and weeping I have moved.
The human joy and pain I have not proved—
And even those whom I have loved the most,
As from afar I loved.

In moments of close kinship felt no less,
Even on the bosom of love still felt to be,
An isolating and old mystery
Falls,—a deep veil of separate loneliness,
Between all souls and me.

And now, below this summit where I stand,
The sleeping city lies austere and gray—
Touched with the first glance of the widening day;
O world of men, could you but understand
All that I long to say!

My love of you must be my only boast,
 (Still powerless, still standing far aside),
Alas, my life has been as one that cried,
"I love you,"—and then vanished like a ghost
From the beloved side!

WITHDRAWAL

THE gray cock is crowing,
The silence is passed.—
Lo—into the Vast
The darkness ebbs flowing.

The lap of the Morning
 Is heaped up with flowers,
 White flowers and hours
 Her bosom adorning.

Lift up your head—
 Nay, weep me no more!
 Through the dark door
 I am vanished and fled.

Beyond dreams and sleep
 And the stars of the dawn,
 With the tide I am drawn
 That ebbs to the Deep.

PHANTASMIA

THE wind of morning has blown out the stars
 And the pale trees stir idly in the Park,
 With the deep quietness ebbs out the dark
 Beyond the dawning and the cloudy bars,
 Along the gray sky-mark.

O what is this dumb portent of unquiet
 That creeps upon me with the growing day!
 What promised music draws my heart away!
 Bend closer and lean low that I may sigh it,
 Come close, that I may say.

Across the edges of the world a singing
 Of dim phantasmal melodies is fled:
 Why will you weep and bury your sad head!
 Why will you make your arms so soft and clinging,
 Enamored of the dead!

Beyond the windy and the widening portal
 Of the gray, lonely and unmeasured dawn
 I move, my soul is summoned and withdrawn,
 I fade away and I am made immortal,
 I pass, and I am gone.

DESOLATION

By water-ways and wharves and ruined docks,
 —Old sluggish fen-lands and abandoned ships,
 Poor ghost, I wander with complaining lips,
 By water-ways and wharves and ruined docks.

Dear love, how well we knew it long ago,—
 The shabby park beside the old, gray port,
 The lamplit street and the half-tumbled fort,
 Dear love, how well we knew it long ago.

Heart-breaking love of the remembered days,
 You cannot know how we poor ghosts return
 To the old haunts with hearts and lips that burn,—
 Heart-breaking love of the remembered days!

In the wide horror and the waste of Time
There lurks a dread more deep than you can guess.
O doomed to an eternal loneliness
In the wide horror and the waste of Time!

Even of myself, even of myself afraid—
Nay—who is this beneath the starry sky
That huddles past, alas and is it I,
Even of myself, even of myself afraid!

O love, beyond the silence of what star,
What mystery, what bourne, what bondage past,
Shall I forget those memories at last—
O love, beyond the silence of what star!

LAST RAPTURE

ALAS the wings of morning are unfurled!
Across the cloudy marshland, bog and fen,
Far, far beyond the myriad haunts of men
Here, on the desolate margins of the world
The white dawn broods again.

Beyond the holy and the smoldering fire,
Listen—beyond the heaven's utmost steep,
Over the world of terror, dreams and sleep
There calls a voice from the seraphic choir
Into the vasty Deep.

Now sets the tide to the ordained and deathless
 And the clear spirit to the Radiance clear.
 O love, in the bleak windy world's end here,
 O in this moment now, supreme and breathless,
 Desolate, wild and drear,

The earnest stars fade flickering and shaking
 Through the cloud-woven rifts of palest blue,
 The wind of morning blows me through and through
 With a wild joy, through all my spirit waking!
 Is it the thought of you!

MORNING-SLEEP

CAN you not hear me now when I call you softly,
 Open your window, dear, I love you, I love you!
 Night is deep, the heaven is starry above you.—
 Can you not hear me when I call you softly?

Open your window, dear, I weary of waiting.
 Do you remember the words of the love we plighted!
 I must fly when the fire of dawn is lighted.
 Open your window, dear, I weary of waiting.

Ah, did you think that I could ever forget you!
 Hurry—hurry! (The robin has given the warn-
 ing),
 Before the wind has kindled the fire of morning!
 Ah, did you think that I could ever forget you!

Quiet you lie there sleeping under the starlight.

O the body is passionate, strong and splendid,

What care you for me whose passion is ended!

Quiet you lie there sleeping under the starlight.

What do I hear—hide me, cover me, hide me!

Pity me, love, poor ghost from a land forsaken,

Gather me close; O do not let me be taken!

What do I hear—hide me, cover me, hide me!

O it is cold, it is cold, will you not hear me!

These are the very meadows we loved and walked
in,

These are the very bowers we sat and talked in.

O it is cold, it is cold, will you not hear me!

O black-hearted! O deceitful—O darling!

O you have forgotten me altogether!

O you have forgotten me altogether,—

PHANTOMS

O ALL the air is eager with the Spring,—

In the wet Park the first, faint crocus tips

Peer up out of the ground in straggling strips

And all the world leans forward quivering

At April's amorous lips.

I am so tired. What is that sound of warning?—

Listen—it calls again—Away—away!

I must be gone with the first breath of day.

One little hour is left before the morning.

Cling to me—make me stay!

Gather me close, O hold me, draw me nearer!
 (Alas my arms are withered now and weak),
 Kiss my lips dumb that are too sad to speak!
Dear love, be kind, the terrible east grows clearer,
 Lean to me, cheek on cheek!

Lay your two quiet and strong arms around me,
 That am so desolate now and so dismayed,
 Before I must return into the shade
And dreadful night, before the dawn has found me.
 O sweet, are you afraid!

Here in the Springtime, in the April gladness,
 Lay your two arms about me evermore:
 Here where the riotous Spring bursts April's door,
Lay your two arms about me full of sadness,
 As in the days before.

THE NEW LOVE

In the silence, in the night,
 When at your window the stars shine through,
Under the starlight, under the shining light,
 Over the fallen dew,
 I will come to you.

O love, O sweet,—
 Not with the seeking passion of yore,
Not with the eager eyes and the lips that meet,
 Banished forevermore.
 O not as before!

Having seen, having known

You, at last as you truly are—

The divine pain of the human, sad and alone,

Scattered in the deeps afar

Star beyond star;

A deep, a new—

Almost a pity fills me now,

Not with the old desire I turn to you,—

O I cannot tell you how!

O I *love* you now!

Dear heart, dear face,

So lovable, so absurd, so dear—

How can I think of you now as in the old days!

A pity, deeper and more clear,

Weeps in me here.

Alas, alas,

Not with the seeking passion of yore,

Bending down in the night I will kiss you as I pass

Once, and forevermore.

O not as before!

TRANSLATION

Now, while in heaven the sleepless planets wheeling

Down the eastern slope a flashing radiance shed,

As one that dreams I move with noiseless tread,

Through the old haunts and aisles memorial stealing,

An exile, from the dead.

The avenues where arm in arm we strolled,
The benches in the Park and the long lawn
Fade dimly off into the dark withdrawn.
Cupola and pagoda glimmer cold
In the bleak breath of dawn,

While 'round the world ebbs the deep silence stream-
ing,
And the sick lamps burn luridly and flare.—
A lion groans from the casino there.
A lonely peacock from the hillside screaming
Shatters the crystal air.

But look—the arches of the east grow light
And the pure brows of morning pale and dim,
From flaming lips breaks the seraphic hymn,
The holier fire, immaculate and white,
Pants on the radiant rim,

And the huge city, dumb and undivining,
Toward the great tenderer Beauty seems to lean
In yearning silence,—in the vast, serene
Flame of the splendor of the morning shining,
Made laughable and obscene,

With all her dull, dark streets empty and soundless!
Dear heart, for your sake, at the thought thereof
Heart-breaking pity breaks my heart; above
The sorrow of self my soul soars, winged and bound-
less,
Into the heaven of Love,

Seeing the human and holy beauty blended
Touch lips to lips in the white light of morn.
O lesser human beauty and laughed to scorn,
I love you more! O temporal and splendid!
O dust whereof I was born!

What is this love that deeply in me waking
Swells like a sob for very joy of pain,
For all sad human things and all things vain!
A passionate love, unbounded and heart-breaking,
Not to be felt again.

To myriad pipes beyond the morning shrilling
The tides of sleep ebb to the unknown sea.
I am caught up and carried, far and free,
On the wide waste of uttermost music thrilling
Into Eternity.

Seek me no more who am beyond all keeping,
Pray me no more who am beyond all prayer,
Beyond all love, all beauty and all care.
Weep me no more, who am beyond all weeping
High up in the starry air.

I am as one whom the immortal warning
Of dawn has summoned from tumultuous wars,
Above earth's beauty lifted and earth's scars,
Drunk with the wonder and the wind of morning,
A voice among the stars.

SPRING-PRAYER

Now I am vanished far
Into the empty land,
Pray for me with your lips
That cannot understand.

Spring in a shower of joy
Comes gay and rioting;
Be sad a little for me
Dear, in the laughing Spring.

Pity me cold and gray—
O all the world is glad
With love and Spring—but you
Dear heart, do you be sad

A little while, and sorrow
Though all things else rejoice.
Pray for me with your lips
And hush your singing voice

A little while, remembering
How lost I am and far,
Beyond the fire of morning,
Star beyond paling star.

Pity with your red lips,
So glad and fit to sing,
Mine that are hushed and cold
Here, in the laughing Spring!

SALUTATION.

THE gray night lapsing from the east has left,
Beyond the ebb-tide on the twilight's bars,
A few sad remnants of her splendor,—stars
Upon the beach of morning; now bereft
Glitters with scimitars

Her waste, and with the approaching spears of day.
Listen, beyond the heavens deep and pure,
I hear a somber music and obscure!
The flickering star of morning fades away.
Seraphic voices lure.

Why should I mourn so, now that I must leave
All the old human pain I knew so well,
The fears, the hopes, holy and laughable,
So sordid—so divine! Why must I grieve!
Ah why I cannot tell.

Never to know again the joy and sorrow,
—The kiss of earthly lips—the fierce embrace,
The arms of children, the sad, human face!
Never in all the irrevocable To-morrow,
In the vast voids of Space.

O sad humanity, with arms how wide,
How have I longed to take you to my heart!
How have I longed to take you to my heart!
With what fierce pity to press you to my side
Against a breaking heart!

I love you with my very inmost breath—
 The toil and triumph from the laboring womb,
 And the glad passion that defies the tomb—
 The lust—the laughter—yea, and the splendor of
 death,
 Your holy and sullen doom.

The city sleeps patient and dumb and blurred
 Through the low clouds of mist in square and
 street,
 (How many hearts behind her prison beat!)
 A stony desert where no voice is heard,
 Or sob, or sound of feet.

Now more than ever the old human sadness
 Touches my heart with longing vast and vain.
 Now more than ever I yearn to you again.
 Ah nevermore to know of grief or gladness!
 Ah nevermore of pain.

• I, too, have borne them. I am rapt above you
 Into the heaven of heavens keen and pale.
 Over my mouth falls the eternal veil.
 Hail—all men born, and yet to be, I love you!
 All men that have been,—Hail!

TRANSFIGURATION

STAR beyond star deep down in the abysses
 Dawn floods the world with fiery light again,
 O darling—O beloved—O dear face!
 Think not I have forgotten the old pain
 High in this lonely place.

Some little memories of the old earth passion

Still reach me here, throned on the stars above you,
Some dreams of the half-love of long ago.—

O now for the first time I really love you!
O darling, now I know!

The infinite Vast grows white with a new splendor,
Heaven with the morning flames height over height,
And a deep, holier love broods in me too;

A deeper dream, more pure than all delight,
Drowns the old love of you,

Now that I see it all. O of a sudden

The dignity and the pitifulness of things,
The laughable sadness of all things that live,
Snaps in my soul the chord of self that sings!
Dear heart, forgive, forgive.

I am withdrawn into the deeps of heaven,
A surging love lifts me beyond your love,
I am not lost to you though I am gone.

The thought of you within me lifts me above
Myself, upward and on.

O dream which is the purpose of Creation!

O infinite pity, deeper than the soul,
Wherein the high and low are one at last!

O love wider than heaven or the whole
Sweep of the starry Vast!

NIRVANA

SLEEP on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Over the stars that murmur as they go
Lighting your lattice-window far below—
And every star some of the glory spells
Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you, long, long ago,
Like the sweet, silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

FAREWELL

Beyond the topmost star of highest heaven
And murmurous motion of the wheeling spheres,
I am enthroned at last above the years,
I am caught up beyond the shining Seven.

My song is ended and my singing said,
Finished have I with these but mortal things;
My soul takes flight on unremembering wings,
Beyond the fire of morning lost and fled.

Yet though no trace on earth of me belongs,
Still the undying voice of me, my ghost,
Pleads in the choir of the eternal Host,—
Still like a breath she labors in these songs.

O yet in some strange way, I know not how,
 With urgent pity and with aching love
 She yearns to touch you from her heaven above;
 Yea, in these lines her longing calls you now.

Alas, how like we are, all men, alas!
 O brother in the universal doom,
 Even from the womb, even to the conquering tomb
 I, too, have lived. I hail you as I pass!

Now as you read these verses from afar,
 This very moment, from this living rhyme
 I call to you out of the wheels of Time,
 I cry to you beyond the morning-star!

HAIL!

UNDER the infinite tomb of heaven and night
 Lo—I am wafted away forever afar!
 Deep between cloud-line and sky-line one quiver-
 ing star
 Burns, like a lamp, in the tomb of heaven and night.

This, my cry to you out of the spaces afar,
 Once—ere I vanish dissolved into motion and light,
 Once—O peoples to be—farewell and good-night!
 This, my cry to you out of the spaces afar.

